A. T. ARIYARATNE
COLLECTED WORKS

VOLUME VII

EDITED BY
NANDASENA RATNAPALA

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Edited by
Nandasena Ratnapala

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INTRODUCTION

What Dr. A.T. Ariyaratne has written during the recent times is presented in this volume. The reader would see how committed he is to what he is writing, and his practical global perspective. His vision is made more eclectic by his practical programme.

In his essay on'Buddhism in the 21st Century' we observe this commitment and vision. For him, the modern world should be without a north/south division. He sees in Buddhist teachings a common theme valid to all inhabitants of the world. Such a form of Buddhism without divisions such as Hinayana and Mahayana should be presented with economic power. He perceives such countries as Korea, Taiwan and Japan as leaders in presenting Buddhism with an economic basis. Since these are economically powerful countries, they would be able to propage Buddhist ideals to the modern man. "Buddhist countries could get together and at least save those countries from the tentacles of the merciless international arm dealers who provided dissension leading to wars. A World Council of Buddhist countries led by countries such as Taiwan, Japan and Korea, with economic power and communication technology to back them could answer this problem in a realistic way be promoting non-violence and peace."

His essay on 'A Buddhist approach to social and economic development' gives the Buddhist economic theory while showing its practical application in Sarvodaya work. It is a unique essay with the theory coming from Buddhism and the practice taken from Sarvodaya experience. It shows that the Buddhist theory is possible to be practical in a simple and unambiguous manner.

His new thinking bears itself on the essay on people-centred poverty eradication. For Dr. Ariyaratne, poverty can only be eradicated with the people's own effort. How to motivate their power, marshal it and utilise it is being inquired into by him. He draws an example from the Sarvodaya Movement and proves his point in the role of people's power in the eradication of poverty.

Dr. Ariyaratne, in going through into the role of trans-national grassroot movement areas, utilises it to promote ideas of such

organisations as the U.N.E.S.C.O. It is a new way of looking at things because this aspect of the values of such international organisations as the U.N.E.S.C.O. has not been looked into seriously, vis-a-vis the role of grassroot organisations. How important grassroot organisations are in promoting U.N.E.S.C.O. ideals is understood by reading his contributions. Dr. Ariyaratne says that there should be a clear-cut agenda for communities to engage themselves in continuous self-development activities. Young people should be attracted to the U.N.E.S.C.O. national associations. The young people should manage these by themselves, and these should be linked to other community organisations. The perceptions and attitudes can thus be changed to understand global responsibilities.

Dr. Ariyaratne's contribution to the Sixth Indira Gandhi Conference is on the profile of liberty. He examines the social and cultural aspects of liberty. He goes on the say how the social and cultural aspects of liberty were not important to us at the time of freeing ourselves from foreign rule. But we realise today how the social aspect of liberty is important in securing information leading to a meaningful life. Liberty without socio-cultural dimensions would be meaningless in a modern social organisation.

For Dr. Ariyaratne, the greatest tribute one could pay to the Mahatma is in building a Sarvodaya society. He has dedicated himself to this task. Thus, in a way one could see how fruitfully Mahatma's ideals are taken to practical Sarvodaya activity. For Dr. Ariyaratne, Gandhiji's teachings and ideas are best realised in their application to life. In order to achieve this, the embarrassing division between precept and practice had to be given -up. He perceives such a practice in Buddhistic teachings and finds a parallel with Mahatma's thoughts.

Dr. Ariyaratne realised the importance of Gandhiji very rearly in his work as a social activist. In the same manner that Gandhi did by kindling the spirit of kindness and working with underprivileged people, Dr. Ariyaratne too followed suit. He worked with the underprivileged (the Rodiyas at Kanatoluwa) and ignited the flame of kindness wherever he went. He openly says how he re-learned many lessons from Gandhi including the

value of human labour. In the same way, Gandhi used non-violence, Dr. Ariyaratne too utilised it deriving influence from Lord Buddha. In the village, non-violence helped him to solve many a problem. Self-dependence which Gandhi taught became a cornerstone of his philosophy. Dr. Ariyaratne also believed in a total education process having personality awakening and finally leading to group transformation.

At the Asian Conference on Religion and Peace (1996) held in Ayuththaya in Thailand, Dr. Ariyaratne looked into the great division between the rich and the poor and attempted to build a truly sharing community. He considered building a sharing community in Asia as a very practical programme. Since Asians have a rich religious tradition; inspiration could be received from religion as well as culture to forge such a society. The rural communities in Asia should be helped first to help themselves. Self-reliance and community participation in all stages of development are very important which the village community should plan by itself.

Such development of sharing communities should be developed by stages, so that in the fourth stage, the rural community becomes almost independent. "The people have to be helped to empower themselves in six sectors; namely, spiritual, moral, cultural, social, economic and political." Rural awakening needs support from the urban sector.

Building a global civil society of right livelihood in the 21st Century addresses a new problem. Since most people in the world are poor and no single factor causes problems, the inter-related multifarious causes need to be understood. The first step is by establishing ourselves in loving kindness so that we discipline ourselves about the laws that govern man and nature. Five cosmic laws are cited by him:

1. Obey the principles governing the natural genetic order.
2. Do not do anything that disturbs the natural order of seasons.
3. Re-establish faith in the law of causality.
4. Awaken yourselves to the truth of spiritual awakening.
5. Accept the supremacy of the mind and strive to keep it pure.

When one establishes oneself, thus he is practising right livelihood which moves away from earning one's living without injuring living beings, making and selling arms, intoxicants and harmful drugs, polluting and destroying the environment.

His new thinking in the direction of right livelihood takes in to a new dimension in human living. It needs careful consideration and examination of all of us.

Dr. Ariyaratne has a unique experience in translating the Sarvodaya philosophy into action. This philosophy in which Gandhiji's and Vinobha Bhave's ideas are interwoven with Buddhist thought and put into real practice is described in the article on 'Experiencing peace.' The article is further illustrated by the sub-title, "While engaging in experiences based on moral principles'. It tells of Dr. Ariyaratne's personal impressions of his practical programme. The problems faced by him, how be solved such problems and how the moral commitment worked is very lucidly explained in the article.

The Lakshmi Menon memorial lecture deals about 'Politics and Politicians and sustenance of a contented civil society'. It is a tribute to Mrs. Lakshmi Menon who spent a better part of her life in politics. Dr. Ariyaratne echoes the attitude of the public about politicians, but considers politics as not something intrinsically bad, but that politicians are becoming corrupt and that they take to violence and an unethical code of conduct because of the system of power politics we have adopted. It is thus a system of politics and political structure that has been created which hinders us from developing self-control and discipline. He implores that we should look at the problem realistically and opt for a way out of this. We should do this without blindly following the western theories. There is much for us to look up to in our tradition and in our countries what we see here is familiar to us and are with our culture. It is not like bringing something from afar and imposing it on our society. Dr. Ariyaratne sees the spiritual values in all of us as the solution to all this. "This can happen only if we inculcated spiritual values into everything we do in life such as politics, business, medicine or even religion".

The Gandhi Prize acceptance speech examines Gandhi's contribution to humans and the great debt Dr. Ariyaratne owes to Gandhiji. He briefly explains how Sarvodaya arose, based on Gandhi's thoughts and how the practical programme developed in Sri Lanka. In the modern context, Gandhi's thoughts could be extended to modern peace-making. The essence of Gandhi}s thoughts is on peace, and as such, it contains much that is relevant and useful to modern people.

Gandhi's thoughts are explained in relation to education in the next lecture. The simple education based on practice and without any division between precept and practice is what the Sarvodaya inherited from Gandhi. The great Buddha considered education as a wonder. Gandhi's thoughts on education based on love, non-violence and equality emanating from compassion in the heart is correctly interpreted by Dr. Ariyaratne. Education is to create a new man and never to destroy him. Training for a vocation, learning skills is not education. Education should give you tolerance. It is an active state of mood where you understand others with sympathy.

The final essay in this volume deals with the application of traditional Buddhist thoughts in contemporary society. Many of us think that traditional thoughts are quite useless. In this paper Dr. Ariyaratne examines the core of traditional Buddhist thoughts. He shows how Buddhism places man even above God. Although human beings are emphasised in actual practice, Buddhism includes all living beings, including nature. Thus, even the environment including animals and birds are included in it. That is the traditional Buddhist view.

Dr. Ariyaratne examines such traditional thoughts, emphasising their topical importance and values. Compassion for all living beings initiated development. It emphasises equality, tolerance and co-operation. It is thus the basis of total personality development leading to community development later.

The role of socialization emphasised by traditional thoughts where the social evolution is concerned needs mentioning. The group is socialized and developed. The role of the family, religion and education is emphasised. Great care is taken and energy

expended to educate and enable the young people to select good friends in the process. The cause as to the rise of social problems are looked into and accordingly dealt with.

Even with regard to the traditional attitude to violence, there was a social base. "Buddha experienced violence that was found in the society of the days he attempted to help the society to search for a strategy to contain such violence."

The Buddha appreciated a simple life. The conspicuous consumption style was not liked by him. All people's essential needs have to be satisfied. Unnecessary additional needs benefiting only a few should not be created. The traditional view has much in it for us to emulate today.

The importance of traditional thought is cited in the following manner:

"The Buddhist teachings provide us something more than human rights, the rights of all living beings. Human beings, as well as all life do possess an indispensable right to exist. And on no account, without good reason such life be subjected to suffering. Force or fear should not be applied to get animals or human beings to deliver service. Love and compassion should be the guiding rule".

I have elsewhere stated that Dr. Ariyaratne is a visionary. But I have to add that these visionary insights are based and translated into practice. He himself explains on two occasions here how spiritual thoughts are translated into action in the Sarvodaya programme. What he had done nearly in 12,000 villages stand as a monument to his vision and insight. The essays he writes are based on such pragmatic experience. For us, in having him, we are blessed with both vision and practical work. It is a rare combination only to be found in a genius. This man is indeed a genius!

NANDASENA RATNAPALA

BUDDHISM IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Buddha lived in the 6th century BC. Upto today, the end of the 20th century, His Teachings continue to influence generation after generation of people in different climes and different positions in life. What is popularly known as Buddhism is in its detail not identical or similar in all aspects for these different peoples. Therefore, when we discuss about Buddhism in the 21st century, firstly, we have to arrive at a consensus on certain fundamental facts, practices and principles of Buddhism which can be generally accepted by all those who are followers of the Buddha.

In the second instance we have to identify those issues and problems that human societies are faced with now and will face during the 21st century about to dawn and discuss possible ways and means we can adopt to find solutions.

Thirdly, besides Buddhism and Buddhists there are other religious, non-religious and irreligious systems of knowledge, practices and structures with whom we have to co-exist and interact. What are the acceptable Buddhist forms of conduct in these situations?

Lastly, as a firm believer in both the precept and practice I believe we should adopt A Universal Charter for Buddhist Practice in the 21st Century. Based on this charter different Buddhist groups in different places can develop portfolios of activities which together can make a significant contribution to human society in the 21st century. What follows in this paper is a modest elaboration of these four ideas.

All Buddhists irrespective of the school of Buddhism, such as THERAVADA, MAHAYANA or VAJRAYANA to which they belong, accept Buddha as their supreme teacher or the embodiment of the highest level of enlightenment they can attain by following the different paths shown by the Dhamma. From our childhood as Theravada Buddhists we have been chanting pali

stanzas like the following:

> *"Buddham Jīvitha Pariyantham Saranam Gaccāmi. Ye ca Buddhā Atitāca, Ye ca Buddhā Anāgatā, Paccuppanāca ye Buddha, Ahan vandāmi sabbadā. Natthi me saranaṃ aññaṃ, Buddho me saranaṃ varaṃ. Buddho yo kalitho doso, Buddho Kamatutaṃ mama."*

This means: ("I shall take life-long refuge in the Buddha. I worship all the Buddhas of the past, the future and the present. I have no other refuge than the refuge in the Buddha. I beg forgiveness from the Buddha for my defilements.")

Then we chant the names of twenty eight immediate past Buddhas who appeared during the past world cycles and also worship the future Buddhas like the Ariya Metteyya Buddha.

It is my view that the worship of Siddhatta Gotama who was born in 624 B.C. and who attained Supreme Enlightenment at the age of 35, who thereafter came to be known as Buddha, the Awakened One, is in reality is a worship of all Buddhas past, future and present. Our supreme goal as Buddhists is to attain this level of awakening So the historical figure of Gautama Buddha as the Awakened One closest to our times or as the embodiment of enlightenment or as the symbol of realization of the supreme goal by all the Buddhas should not be a matter for dissension or for ideological differences. All Buddhists should accept Buddha as our Supreme teacher. Our shrine rooms in popular Buddhism can be adorned with numerous images of Buddhas and this does no harm to our practice of the Dhamma.

A person becomes initiated as a Buddhist when he takes refuge by his own free will in the Buddha, Dhamma and the Sangha. This is the accepted norm among Theravāda Buddhists. If the other Buddhist sects and schools accept these Three Refuges, namely, Buddha, Dhamma and the Sangha this is going to be, in my opinion, a major breakthrough in uniting Buddhists the world-over. Such a unity among Buddhists is a *sine quo non* both for the protection and advancement of Buddha Sasana and for the facilitation of the contribution Buddhists can make to the global society to face the myriad ills she is facing.

We are aware of the doctrinal differences that stand in our way to such an acceptance of the Three Refuges as a general requirement to be a Buddhist. However, this should not be considered as an insurmountable obstacle as all BUDDHIST SECTS the world over have already established closer links as never before in recent history. Perhaps the general advancement of transportation and communication systems have contributed much to the narrowing of this gap. We have to go another step forward.

With regard to the Dhamma, the doctrine or the teaching undoubtedly there are widely different interpretations perpetuated even within the same sect. Similarly the interpretation given to the word Sangha differs from the earlier version particularly among the non-Asian Buddhist groups. This problem also can be sorted by dialogue.

At this point I would like to make a remark which I think is of critical importance. Doctrinal differences will not confuse Buddhist scholars. They will hold on to their opinions based on their understanding and will change them if they are convinced that it is necessary to change their opinions based on new insights. In the same token non-practitioner Buddhist scholars, or non-Buddhist scholars, in my opinion are not so concerned about simple norms, customs, practices beliefs and so on which are important to ordinary and simple Buddhists to keep their family and community life going and living in peace and harmony. If the doctrinal differences are taken too far as to disturb the 'Saddha,' the faith, of the ordinary Buddhists this is damaging to the Buddhist community as well as to the society in general.

In an enlightened age like today at least for the sake of ordinary lay Buddhist followers we have to reach consensus on certain fundamental teachings and precepts. After taking refuge in the Triple Gem we go on to make a promise to ourselves that we shall observe the Five Precepts. We know how difficult it is to observe even one precept fully when we take into consideration that these precepts have to be observed in thought, word and deed. Still the very knowledge that we have to take refuge in the Buddha, Dhamma and the Sangha and strive to observe the Precept of Non-killing, Non-stealing, Non-sexual-misconduct, Non-lying and Non-consumption of Intoxicants, if we are to call

ourselves Buddhists, gives us points of reference and norms for proper conduct. Sīla or Morality is the edifice on which a spiritual life leading to Samadhi or Concentration of Mind and Paññā or Wisdom have to be cultivated. Therefore before going into doctrinal differences it is an important practical necessity for us to reach agreement on these aspects of Buddhism.

For Theravāda Buddhists the word Sangha has a very special meaning and significance. It means more than the literal meaning of a community. It is even more than the saffron robed monks of the present day. It is a spiritual community which began at the time of the Buddha with his first five disciples and continues to this day and will continue into the future. It is the third Noble Gem. This term Sangha, therefore, should not be loosely used. In my opinion it should be used for all Buddhist clergy of all sects who satisfy certain commonly agreed principles. Lay Buddhists should not use the word Sangha. Instead they can used to a word like the Upāsaka.

What is Sangha? Dr. W.G. Weeraratne, in his Buddhism For Every Man, gives a lucid answer to this question:

"The whole congregation of disciples, who renounce lay life and join the Order of monks to live a full religious life according to the teachings of the Buddha, is called the Sangha. When a person decides to live a full religious life he has to bid farewell to all his kith and kin, renounce whatever worldly possessions he has, shave off his hair and bread, drape himself in a robe and seek permission from the congregation of monks to become one of its members. At the start Buddha himself ordained members, but as numbers began to increase, senior monks together with a specified number of members were permitted to perform the necessary ceremonies in connection with the admission of members to the Order. A newly admitted member has to be under the supervision of a teacher and preceptor to learn the rules of conduct, discipline himself accordingly and learn the teachings of the Buddha. Learning the Dhamma, preaching it to laymen, and constant disciplining of the self are the many duties of a member of the Order of monks. They are forbidden to engage in earning wealth. The lay followers are expected to make donations of food, robes, medicines etc to them for their sustenance. A monk is expected to lead a pure and clean life and give religious instruction to the lay

supporters in return to the munificence the lay people bestow on him. A monk has nothing that he may call his own and is expected to possess only his bare requisites, namely, three robes, a bowl, a razor, a needle, a girdle and a water strainer."

"A monk does not have a permanent place of residence. He may live in a monastery where other monks live, but none of them have any personal claim to its ownership. As long as a monk lives in a monastery he has a right to use its facilities in common with other residents. When a layman makes a gift to the monks, it is offered to the whole congregation, and the monks accept it on behalf of the whole congregation of monks past. present and future."

Today this situation may not exist in most places. At the same time there are even some places where monks do live up to this discipline and satisfy the conditions traditionally required of a monk. Therefore, it is my opinion that this ideal should be kept alive for posterity considering the number of people who are dissatisfied with their ordinary everyday lives and looking for an alternative way of living. Neither scientific explanations nor the traditional Judaeo-Christian explanation of things seem to be giving these people the satisfaction they are looking for. They are looking for something deeper, creative and practical which they can try out and live themselves. Some out of these people will certainly take to a monastic life and probe deeper and deeper into spiritual realms.

An excellent example can be cited from Sri Lanka, namely, the unique contribution made to Buddha Sāsana by their piety, exemplary monastic life, scholarship and propagation of the Dhamma during this century by the internationally reputed western monks who lived in forest monasteries in Dodanduwa and Kandy. The lead that the late Ven. Gñānatilōka, Ven. Gñānasatta, and Ven. Gñānaponika gave from the beginning of this century is continued today to the next century by the young Ven. Bodhi.

Similarly in a few forest monasteries such as Kanduboda and Meethirigala in Sri Lanka local monks continue with monastic traditions giving benefits to a considerable number of local and foreign devotees. Great monks of the stature of late Ven. Mahasi

Siyadaw of Burma and Ven. Buddhadasa of Thailand and the contribution they made for the modern Buddhist revival are internationally known. I am sure in the Mahāyana tradition too a considerable number of monks and monasteries do exist which have made a tremendous contribution to spread the Dhamma of the Enlightened One. We have to do everything possible to protect the quality of these monasteries and assist the monks to continue with their traditions conducive to a spiritual life aimed at full enlightenment.

This does not mean that innovations and changes in keeping with changing times and the environment are not to be encouraged. On the other hand all encouragement and recognition should be given to those genuine spiritual endeavours by committed individuals. One such successful innovative effort is the Western Buddhist Order and the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order founded by the Most Venerable Sangharakkhita Maha Thero of England. This is a new Buddhist Movement founded by him in 1967 in response to a felt-need in the West to encourage and help people actually to practice and live the teachings of the Buddha. This has now become an international movement for Buddhist study, meditation and practice helping individuals who have Gone for Refuge to Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha. Ven Sangharakkhita explains what a Spiritual Community does in the following words: " ..... in general, the members of the Spiritual Community do two things for the world. First of all, they keep the spiritual community itself in existence. One might say that it is good for the world such a thing as the Spiritual Community should simply be there, good that there should be people around who are dedicated to the spiritual life, dedicated to the development of skilful states of mind. This is good because it helps to develop a more wholesome atmosphere in the world.

"Secondly, members of the spiritual community help the world by building a bridge between the world and the spiritual community - or at least laying down a few stepping stones. They do this by getting together, in teams of four, or five, or more, and conducting various activities conducive to the development of skilful mental states. These activities help people to evolve from the worldly plane to the mixed plane, perhaps even from the mixed plane to the spiritual plane....

"In this way the members of the Spiritual Community, or those individuals who are committed to the ideal of human Enlightenment, - committed to the attainment of higher levels of consciousness and insight, - help people in the world to develop more and more skilful thoughts, to grow in contentment, in love, and in understanding, and to indeed, for themselves, the meaning of Spiritual Community."

The world, although it is divided into various countries and peopled by different faiths, is made smaller by todays transport and communication systems. Buddhism in the Twenty First Century should adjust itself to this modern development so that the message of the Buddha could be delivered to every one in a language he or she understands in a simple form.

We should try to do this with the leadership of countries such as Taiwan, Korea, Thailand and Japan. These countries have the distinctive advantage of being Buddhist while being economically and technologically advanced. These countries are powerful nations still preserving the message of the Buddha. The majority of the Buddhist world consists of economically poor countries. Buddhism and the Buddhist way of life were suppressed due to the lack of this economic and political power. Moreover modern technology is found in its most developed form in these countries. Herein lies the greatest resource for development of Buddhism in the 21st century.

In the future the concept and the practice of world Buddhism should emerge from these countries. With their leadership they should form a Supreme Council to disseminate the Buddhist message to the entire world. Economically powerless Buddhists in poorer countries need this Council's help to escape from being the prey of over-enthusiastic religious crusaders and fanatics who often attempt to convert them by spending large amounts of money they have at their command for proselytizing purposes. In my own country large numbers of poor Buddhists are converted by such people by offering them money, handouts, houses and jobs thus exploiting their ignorance and poverty. This is all done under the guise of social service and development of the poor.

Buddhism for tomorrow's world need not contain most of

philosophical and practical details unintelligible to the common man. These could be left for scholarly debate and dialogue both among the Buddhists themselves and with those of other religions. Buddhism should not be "marketed" with brand names such as Theravāda, Mahāyaha or Vajrayāna etc. The simple faith in the Buddha, Dhamma and the Sangha, the Five Principles of Ethics (Panca Sila), the Four Noble Truths and the Noble Eight-fold Path are sufficient to formulate a simple form of Buddhism acceptable to all. An essential part of this simple Buddhism for our simple people is the content of those parts that all should know to chant by heart and know the meaning. While the original language used by the Buddha, namely, Pāli can be the common language these can be chanted in one's own language as well. A simple life story of the Buddha, selected number of simple but important sutras from all traditions will complete the picture. Similarly, in the area of meditational practice there should be consensus reached about two three forms of elementary meditation commonly accepted. In this exercise I would recommend that the Buddhist audience we should keep in mind is Junior School Level. When the foundation is laid in this manner each Buddhist community will develop their own higher levels of Buddhist learning and practice.

Once this step is taken Buddhist scholars can take the more difficult next step of building up consensus on higher and more philosophical teachings such as the 'Paticca Samuppāda' doctrine (The Theory of Dependent co-arising). Encouragement and support to the centres of advanced Buddhist learning and higher meditation, like Vipassanā (Insight) or Zen meditation centres, I mentioned before, is the natural step to be taken simultaneously. My plea is that from the grassroots simple Buddhist Communities the world over to Buddhist scholars and leaders at the highest levels there should be a link, an identity, 'A Golden Thread' running through them all and binding them together. Then only the Buddhist influence can be effectively exerted on human civilization at the turn of the century.

In speaking of a simple form of Buddhism we should not forget today's pressing economic, political, social and environmental problems and show how these could be addressed in a Buddhist way. The Universal Charter For Buddhist Practice mentioned earlier fits into this particular context. Human Rights,

for example, is spoken of in every world assembly. The Buddha emphasized Human Rights as well as duties; but He went still further and spoke of the rights of all living beings including animals too. His concept of universal love extended beyond human beings to animals and even plants. It still goes further even to cover non-human beings. May be in the Twenty First Century in the solar system we may discover other worlds inhabited by non-human beings unlike us. The relevance of Buddhist thinking here need not be unduly elaborated.

The awareness of one's environment both physical and social is understood today. Environmental groups in every society attempt to create this awareness and even conduct active campaigns against formidable governments to preserve the environment. The Buddha had spoken of "Patirupa Desa Vasoca", living in a congenial environment, as one of the blessings in life. To me the entire Ratana Sutta is a discourse by the Buddha on ecological sustainability. He went beyond physical and social environment by adding a psychological or spiritual dimension to the environment. The Panca Niyama Dhamma, the Five Cosmic Laws, namely, Bija Niyama (Cosmic Law pertaining to Genes), Utu Niyama (Seasons), Kamma Niyama (Causality), Dhamma Niyama (Phenomena) and Citta Niyama (Mind or Consciousness), taught in the Buddha Dhamma covers every aspect of environment.

No where is this dimension observed as when Buddhists practise universal love. In the same manner a mother loves her only child one should learn to love all living beings irrespective of race, religion, country, class etc.This is a process which starts with oneself, ones loved ones, neighbours, community, country, the world, the world system unto infinity. By infusing the environment with compassion or love you enrich it more going beyond the physical and social aspects. The fallout from non-compassion or hatred is greater in its damage than even the fallout from an enormously destructive nuclear weapon.

The relevance of Buddhism to the modern world is observed in looking at some present world problems. The insatiable production of armaments and their inordinate sale emanate from endless greed to earn money. The Buddhist countries could get

together and at least save their countries from the tentacles of the merciless international arms dealers who promote dissensions leading to wars. A world council of Buddhist countries led by countries such as Taiwan, Japan and Korea, with economic power and communication technology to back them could answer this problem in a dignified and realistic way by promoting non-violence and peace.

The worldwide problem of the manufacturing and sale of drugs is another area that should provide food for thought for the Buddhists. The drugs are produced by poor people who are exploited by the rich and powerful. Economic assistance to such people mainly in Buddhist countries would help to ease this problem at least to a satisfactory extent.

Promoting a Buddhist Economic Philosophy and Co-operation among Buddhist communities based on the Universal Charter for Buddhist Practice will be the need of the 21st century. Some form of economic unity perhaps with a common currency, with free trade and travel, closer export and import systems and common defence can be an expected future development in our part of the word also. Although for us today this would appear not very probable, as Buddhists in the next century we would be compelled to think of practical ways and means to deal with such developments. But let us not wait for that time, but begin now itself.

The Buddha's message should go to everyone in every country of this world. As stated earlier a simple message in a way people could understand should be formed taking the essence of Buddhism sans school labels. It should be the Blessed One's teaching given in every possible language, translated by a council of world Buddhist scholars. Let it go to our non- Buddhist bretheren with whom we should co-exist with understanding, appreciation and intelligence.

Buddhism always appreciates other person's point of view. Therefore co-existence with other religious groups would not be a problem to Buddhists. This position of Buddhist teaching should be made clear to others so that no misunderstandings should arise. Not only religious differences but also social and cultural

variations, political and ideological differences are not obstacles for people to live peaceful lives.

At this point I would like to briefly mention about nearly four decades of effort I have put in with my colleagues to put Buddha's Teachings into a working model of development practice in Sri Lanka. I am referring to the Sarvodaya Movement of Sri Lanka. In Sri Lanka Sarvodaya derived its inspiration from Buddhism and developed it accordingly. Although we owe our enormous gratitude to Mahatma Gandhi and his disciple Acharya Vinobha Bhave, Sarvodaya in Sri Lanka is essentially based on Buddhist philosophy and practice. This Buddhist essence brought out by Sarvodaya is acceptable to non-Buddhists in Sri Lanka as well. and today both Buddhists and non-Buddhists in Sri Lanka and outside attempt to practise its development philosophy.

Sri Lanka is a country of South Asia where, for millennia, two traditions have prevailed and intertwined, a predominantly Buddhist tradition among the majority Sinhala community and the lesser though no less vibrant Hindu tradition in the Tamil communities.

Accordingly, patterns of development which start at the grassroots and at high levels of disempowerment and human distress, must of necessity call upon visions for development which mobilize the family and the extended village society. In other words reaching to the very roots of indigenous wisdom and spirituality - of whichever faith and belief - in our instance Buddhist culture.

This was the road we took. A road we took both by necessity and intimate belief. A road which has proved immensely successful, as over the four decades of labour, village communities progressed from a state of dire difficulty into awakened, dignified, confident and empowered individuals. We struggled hard under all odds and succeeded during this period in helping nearly 10,000 village communities in Sri Lanka out of a total of 24,000 to take to a path of self-development based on self-reliance and community participation. Yet in a society where social, economic and technological disparities are high these communities need assistance to supplement their self-help. This

assistance initially came even modestly mainly from western donor agencies. At the beginning they did not try to impose their values or development methodologies on us and we developed programmes on every aspect of development, welfare and advocacy and proved that spiritual value systems of our traditional societies could be preserved while we improve economically. In other words we found that Buddhist philosophy could be put into modern development action. We found that there are non-violent and constructive ways of social transformation that can be brought about according to the Dhamma.

However we got into difficulties when our most important western donors dramatically cut their grants giving various reasons such as budget cuts and aid being shifted to Africa and Eastern Europe. Nonetheless it is our belief that the reasons are deeper than budget cuts. Perhaps we have a conflict in value systems.

It is unfortunate for us here in the poorer parts of Asia that the western donors just do not grasp the deep spiritual and cultural dimensions necessary for real development and what these mean for the people. In essence, for the western donors, non-conformity with so-called normal patterns of materialistic development is not permissible, and certainly not worth consideration for funding. This is the sorry fact we have encountered.

So we have to turn back to the East, to a pattern of culture we understand and are understood by; indeed we want to turn back to the East, to the richer, developed, populations of the East and we would invite them to look at the Sarvodaya Model -

Buddhist Tenets and Theory and Culture in development practice. Perhaps lessons from Sarvodaya will help in the reawakening of Buddhist Asia.

In Buddhism we have generosity - Dana as cardinal, positive characteristic to be practised by Buddhists. Dana means the giving of physical, spiritual, psychological, cultural , social inspiration, motivation and assistance to others. It could be correctly interpreted by calling Dana, sharing of resources beginning from the economic to social, educational, cultural, spiritual and

whatever other resources human beings possess. When you teach a skill to another it is Dana of the highest quality. When you counsel someone and help him or her to understand one's problems in a better way, it is Dana. In the next century Buddhists should re-interpret Buddhist positive values in the modern context, immediately useful, relevant and easily adaptable in human life of the times.

Today we observe how the world is in search of a meaningful development theory and practice. Development conceived purely along economic lines has not been able to do with even abject primary poverty present all throughout the world. The international institutions such as the World Bank, IMF etc. have miserably failed. The socialist facade has almost crumbled with the eventual fall of Soviet Power. The capitalist world led by the western powers is gradually reaching the contradictory nature of their own development theory. The thinking few in the west at least are questioning the sanity of their own theory of development.

In this context we the Buddhists should evolve the Buddhist theory of world development. Since Taiwan, Korea and Japan are developed countries it is nothing but correct for Buddhists in these countries to look back critically at their own past, derive inspiration from it, and try to give the rest of the Buddhist world the benefit of their experience. Your leadership in this area as scholars, entrepreneurs, politicians, journalists etc. is greatly appreciated by the Buddhist world. You are the guiding lights for rest of us at the dawn of the twenty first century. It is your decision that would not only affect Buddhists but every one else living in this small planet of ours - and may in the twenty-first century in other planets too.

We are on the threshold of great discoveries and among such discoveries, the re-discovery of our common faith, Buddhist teachings, to pit in with the aspirations and realities of a new world would be the most formidable challenge.

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A BUDDHIST APPROACH TO SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT - AN EXPERIENCE FROM SRI LANKA

This article is my humble tribute to a Buddhist Monk who has truly given effect to the Buddha's exhortation to his disciples to spread the Dhamma for the welfare of the many. The Venerable Prayudh Payutto has the very rare ability to look at worldly life as it is lived today and expound the Buddha's teachings to enable lay people like myself to apply the teachings to our daily lives. His books have opened the eyes of many, in and outside Thailand, to the wisdom that is our heritage. We at Sarvodaya are attempting to practice the teachings of the Buddha to re-generate in our society those universal values which appear to be eroding under the onslaught of greed, hatred and ignorance. This article is a brief description of our continuing attempt.

Buddha's message is timeless. It is not confined to any particular country or people. He showed a way where human beings can attain complete self realisation while living a life in harmonious relationships with other human beings, the rest of the sentient beings and nature as a whole. His teachings and the ethical values he propounded are as valid today as they were during the time he was alive in the 6th century B.C.

There were times when rulers of nations like Emperor Asoka of India and many others in Sri Lanka, Burma, Siam and other Asian countries attempted to follow His teachings in all aspects of life in their nations. Some of these are cited as models of peaceful, harmonious and happy societies. However, in the context of the world today, we no longer find such models as most countries in Asia were subjected to colonial rule for long periods of time. During the colonial period the Buddhist art of governance and the science of social and economic development were overpowered by the dominant values and structures from the Western powers. In spite of five centuries of such a materialistic and unbalanced approach to social and economic development in our countries

there were local communities and groups who survived and struggled to retain some of those Buddhist values and attempted to manage their social and economic relationships in somewhat of a Buddhist way.

Elements of the Buddhist Society

Coming to my country Sri Lanka, even today, it is referred to as a Buddhist country. Whenever a national tragedy occurs even those who do not profess Buddhism are quick to ask the question. "How can this kind of thing happen in a Buddhist country"? I remember when we experienced the horrendous wave of communal riots for a couple of days in July 1983, a very respected Christian dignitary came to my house and asked the same question. "How can this happen in our Buddhist country"? We can now ask other questions like "How can Sri Lanka have the highest suicide rate in the world? How can there be so many homicides? How can we explain the high rate of alcoholism and drug abuse in our country? How can there be so much child abuse? How can there be a civil war - which is being misnamed a communal war - which takes hundreds of lives every month and maims thousands of others - going on for the last 15 years? How can all these things happen in a Buddhist country?" I venture to say that though we have a majority of people who are categorized as Buddhists, still we do not have a Buddhist society as such.

One can call a society a Buddhist society if two basic conditions are satisfied. Firstly, as citizens the majority of people or a critical mass of the population should follow the basic tenets of Buddhism. They should accept and respect Buddha as their teacher, follow the Dhamma the doctrine He enunciated, and emulate and take care of the Sangha, the enlightened order of monks who live saintly lives and teach like His Dhamma both by precept and by example. Then the basic minimum, the ethical code against killing, thieving sexual misconduct, lying and intoxication, should be the guiding foundation for the personal conduct of human beings. As citizens we do not sufficiently satisfy this first condition of respecting the Triple Gem and following the Five Precepts.

Secondly, the guiding principles of the State should be

formulated in such a way that the above code of moral conduct is facilitated. The State should abstain from doing anything that would encourage people to break the Five Precepts. The State should also reflect the spirit of Buddhism in areas that together determine the direction and value content of the society. These six areas are the spiritual awakening of human being, interpersonal moral relationships between individuals, the spiritual and moral content of the total culture of society, the criteria that determine the social development of society, the principles and policies on which the economic development of the nation is guided and the principles on which the system of government is established. When all these six sectors are taken into consideration I do not see in any of them the content and spirit of a Buddhist society being consciously and judiciously followed by the State. This may be true for other Buddhist countries as well.

On the contrary, instead of a total vision as propounded by the Buddha, alien and materialistic ideological norms and numerous amateurish and adventurous policies are followed in all these sectors.

The Buddhist Approach to Development

In a country we have both a formal and an informal sector. In the formal sector the government and private sectors are included. It is this formal sector that has relationships with the inter-governmental organizations and multi-national corporations. The informal sector comprises the small communities and groups whose social and economic transactions do not go into public accounting statistics. The informal sector is ignored and bypassed by formal economic and social development policy-makers and project implementers.

However, if a Buddhist approach to economic and social development is followed by anyone, it is to be found in this informal sector. Sometimes there are informal sector organizations who have succeeded in discovering, harnessing and organizing community initiatives for a Buddhist model of social and economic development. Of these, the one I am most familiar with is the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement of Sri Lanka which has experimented with this model for the last 40 years. In this paper I

will be making references to this Movement to demonstrate the practicability of the Buddhist approach to social and economic development even in modern times, particularly in rural areas.

The Buddha means the Awakened One. All human beings have the potential to awaken one's personality to the fullest by practising 'Dana' - which means giving, beneficence or righteous sharing, 'Sila' or moral principles, and 'Bhavana' or cultivating right-mindfulness. Development of morality, cultivation of the skill to be mindful every moment and right-awareness help the human personality to cultivate supreme wisdom. This is what the Buddha achieved and advocated to the seekers after truth who try to attain supreme happiness.

The essence of Buddha's teachings is found in His teachings on the Four Noble Truths, the Noble Eight-Fold Path and the 'Paticca Samuppada Dhamma' - Theory of Dependent Origination. These teachings have to be understood and practiced by each individual relying on oneself. No teacher, not even the Buddha, can liberate a person. All that an outsider can do is to guide persons who are seeking after the Truth. However, Buddha's teachings also abound with guidelines as to how a social, economic and political environment can be achieved and sustained which helps the individual to follow a path of self-purification. In this paper we are interested in such attempts.

In the ultimate sense, all attempts by all sectors, formal or informal, should be for the attainment of the highest happiness for all. When Buddha had 60 monks who had attained full enlightenment he beseeched them "Oh, monks, Go forth to the world disseminating the Dhamma, (the teaching) for the well-being, the happiness of as many people as possible. No two should go in one direction." The well-being, the happiness and the awakening of all is the objective of the Buddhist approach to social, economic and political development.

In the Buddhist perspective, development is an awakening process. Sustainable development is the capacity of a community to maintain the conditions under which such an awakening is possible not only for the present generation but for the future generations as well. It is a sustained effort to awaken in all

aspects, spiritual and ethical as well as social and economic, the individual, the family, the community, rural as well as urban groups, nations and the world community. In the teachings of the Buddha in numerous discourses he has given advice on how this awakening from the individual to the global level could be achieved.

In the Sarvodaya Movement programmes have been developed over the years in accordance with the Buddha's teachings for awakening of all. Now I will examine some of these beginning with the social and economic development of the village community.

The Buddhist Vision in Action

It is estimated that there are about 25,000 villages in Sri Lanka. Out of these, Sarvodaya programmes are implemented in varying degrees in about 11,300 of them. During Buddha's time, in India there were small democratically governed kingdoms or Village Republics like those of Liccavis and Vajjins. Lord Buddha cited these communities possessed certain characteristics that empowered them to stand against any outside interference. Mahatma Gandhi, twenty-five centuries later, again emphasized the fact that an ideal society could be built if India was transformed into a Commonwealth of Village Republics. According to the Buddha, the salient features of these communities were frequent meetings of the community; community participation in decision-making; assembling in peace, discussing in peace and dispersing in peace; adhering to the laws that prevailed; not imposing laws that cannot be obeyed; protection and well-being of children, women, the sick, the disabled and the elderly; continuing traditional cultural events without a break, and inviting, looking after and learning from the wise such as those monks and recluses who have abandoned the household life in search of spiritual enlightenment.

The Buddhist approach to development of communities should therefore begin with such social motivation, mobilization and organization as explained above in the 'Saptha Aparihaniya Dharma' or the seven modes of conduct of a group that lead to a non-degenerative society. Practicing sharing of one's time,

thought, efforts, knowledge and resources (Shramadana), using a language that is pleasant and non offensive (Priya-vacana), getting the community to engage in constructive work (Artha-charya) and treating all as equals and giving due respect to all irrespective of various social divisions (Samanathmatha) are the four salient social ethics that Buddhism promotes. In organizing villages, the Sarvodaya Movement tries to create a physical, social and psychological environment through Shramadana Camps which enables them to satisfy their basic community needs such as access roads to a village, construction, repair and maintenance of irrigation facilities, community housing, community sanitation and health facilities, environmental protection and so on. What comes to the forefront in such activities is the Buddhist teaching on self-reliance and community participation for self-development. Dependence on external handouts is not the Buddhist way.

Personality Awakening

The freedom and happiness of the human being is at the centre of the Buddhist approach to progress. Human personality awakening is the foremost item in the Buddhist agenda. No country can progress without its citizens reaching a high level of spiritual and moral attainment. It is only with this kind of personality awakening that proper relationships with fellow human beings and the right use of resources can be utilized for the social development of a country. In the Buddhist teachings both spiritual-moral development and socio-economic development are equally emphasized and are expected to take place simultaneously and in a balanced way. Sri Lanka was known both as an island of righteousness (Dharmadeepa) and a nation of economic prosperity (Dhanyagara) in the past.

In the Buddhist agenda of development, therefore, due attention is given to the upbringing of children from their conception in the mother's womb to the awakening of human personalities from birth to death. As far as the human life is concerned, great emphasis is given to pre-natal care, childhood (from birth to year 16), youth (16-35years), middle age (35-60 years) and old age (60 years +). In a Buddhist program of economic and social development emphasis is given to the satisfaction of basic human needs pertaining to each of these age

groups, followed by secondary needs and tertiary needs of families and communities. What is important is not catering to the greed in people, but meeting the needs of people. When we take the above mentioned five human groups we have to consider what are the needs they have which have to be satisfied? As we live amidst poverty in Asia our priority should be not to create a small minority of affluent people but to liberate the majority of people who are poor from that state of poverty. Buddha showed us a Middle Way to liberate ourselves from the sufferings in this cycle of births and deaths, discarding both self-mortification and self-indulgence. The best course of action in the Buddhist spirit we can follow is to have as our aim a no-poverty and no-affluence society.

Elements of Social Development

What are the components that go into social development and how can these be measured at any given time to determine whether a society is progressing or degenerating? In the Sarvodaya Movement they have recognized the following elements that should be considered when planning or implementing social development programmes.

Leadership - In any society, whether it is the family, a community or a bigger social unit, leadership plays a very important role. Similarly, even in different sectors of social activity such as education, health, agriculture, crafts, governance, law and security, religious orders, good leadership is an essential element. Buddha's discourses abound with examples of such leadership. For example, for a political leader or a king he has enumerated ten principles of a good ruler (Dasa Raja Dharma)

They are-

1. Sharing (Dana), of wealth, knowledge, skills and even power and authority.
2. Morality (Sila), good conduct
3. Beneficence (Pariccaga), This can be interpreted as recognition and promotion of talent.
4. Straightforwardness
5. Impartiality in judgement
6. Composure in conduct
7. Non-hatred
8. Non-violence
9. Patience
10. Non-revenge.

At the very beginning of the Karaniya Metta Sutta are mentioned the excellent human qualities such as dexterity, uprightness, exceedingly uprightness, gentleness, courteousness, humility and simplicity, we the humans should develop.

Looking at our societies today, leaders fall far short of these leadership attributes. When leaders are not exemplary in their conduct the whole society degenerates.

Lawlessness, lack of discipline, bribery and corruption, increase in pollution and environmental destruction and many other such social evils are caused and aggravated by lack of leadership. When parents and teachers fall short of these leadership qualities, discipline within families and educational institutions cannot be maintained. Therefore, development of leadership is indispensable for social development. The Sarvodaya programmes at community level aim to develop good leaders at different levels such as in children's groups, youth groups, mothers' groups, farmers' groups, elders' groups and in the community as a whole. Foundations for good leadership should be laid early.

Participation - In Buddhism nothing is attributed to an outside power that determines our lives. We ourselves are responsible for the state of our life and society. Therefore, in every possible way we should participate in all matters that influence our lives. People's participation in bringing about social progress is indispensable in the Buddhist perception of development. Participation is emphasized very much in the Saptha Apariharaniya Dharma we have referred to earlier in this paper. In the Sarvodaya Movement both leadership training and participatory action are promoted by organizing the village community into pre-school groups, children's groups, youth groups, mothers' groups, farmers' groups, elders' groups and so on. Functional leadership that emerges in the activities they themselves plan and carry out pertaining to the satisfaction of basic human needs brings about a high level of social consciousness and also confidence in themselves.

Education - The level of education in a community is a measure that can be used to find out the degree of social development in

that community. Here education is not merely book learning or passing examinations. Education in the first instance is a process by which human personality is awakened. What is required is a kind of education for life, through life and throughout life as Mahatma Gandhi mentioned. It is educating not only the head, but also the hearts and limbs. A truly educated person has a penetrative heart and a disciplined mind. Such a person does not hesitate to do anything socially beneficial including manual labour. Every constructive activity that promotes the well-being of people is held in high dignity. Generally, bookish, certificate-oriented, job-seeking education not only stunts the growth of one's personality, but also creates misfits in society. A Buddhist-oriented educational system on the other hand, whether formal, non-formal or informal education, is incorporated into one total process, is certainly a mark of a progressive society. The community development programmes of the Sarvodaya movement are essentially educational programmes which are designed, among other considerations, to correct the imbalances arising from a formal education system which still suffers from its colonial inheritance. In fact the Sarvodaya Movement started as a corrective response to this ineffective school system.

Health - The level of health in a society is another criterion of social progress. Not only personal health but also community health and environmental health are important. Lord Buddha referred to good health as the greatest gain. Today we are faced with diseases brought about both poverty and affluence. Not only material poverty but also spiritual poverty has contributed to the degeneration of health in the community as a whole. In addition to the conventional diseases, those terminal diseases such as AIDS are the result of a breakdown of the moral order of our society. The need for promotion of mental health is of utmost importance at present times. Buddha showed us the way through the meditational practices he advocated.

Human Rights and Duties - In Buddhism both rights and duties are emphasized in great detail. Lord Buddha has taught us the principles on which we as individuals, families and communities should relate to one another. When parents fall short of their duties towards children or children towards parents; or teachers towards students and students towards teachers; or employers toward their

employees and employees towards their employers; rulers towards the ruled and the ruled towards the rulers; in such a social milieu, human society becomes chaotic.

Environmental Protection - This is another criterion for social progress. Our consciousness about the environment has been lost during the last half a century. We have destroyed our forests, polluted our rivers and poisoned our soil. We have endangered our life support systems. Sometimes these things were done in the name of development. But the result was actually the opposite. In this sector we are becoming increasingly degenerative and unless the Buddhist approach to life, with contentment as the biggest wealth, is accepted and a simple lifestyle is followed we will make our lands uninhabitable.

Social Integration - While preserving our cultural identities, if we can live together in peace and harmony our society will progress. Today this is not happening. Instead of using our diversity as a very important resource for progress we have made it a reason for conflict. This has today multiplied into a protracted civil war in Sri Lanka which has been going on for over 15 years now. No social development is possible unless the diverse communities and groups that comprise such a community learn to live with respect for one another. The Buddhist approach is certainly not sectarian. This is a holistic approach where the humanity is considered as one large family.

Women and Children - In peaceful times as well as times of social conflict and disturbance, those who suffer most are the women and children. As a result of the civil war that is going on, this kind of suffering has come to almost every village and house both in the north and south. Malnutrition of children and lack of equal rights for women, which already existed in our society, have been aggravated by the conflict situation in the country. For social development, therefore, it is necessary - both in 'normal' times and at times of war - that there is an accepted norm that women and children should be safeguarded at all times. The standard by which we can judge any civilized society is the status it affords to its women and the protection it offers its children.

Peace - Peace is not just absence of war. Peace is a state of consciousness dynamically maintained by the people in a society

where the evils of greed, hatred and ignorance are reduced to a minimum and, non-greed and non-hatred are increased to the maximum.

In the beginning of the 16th century when the Portuguese conquered the maritime provinces of Sri Lanka and were committing atrocities on people to force them to embrace the Catholic religion, the King of Kandy arranged for the Buddhists, Hindus and Muslims to come into the Kandyan Kingdom and provided them with villages to live in safety. Later when the Dutch invaded the Portuguese-occupied areas and started persecuting the Catholics, similar action was taken by the King of Kandy to provide Catholics safety in the Kandyan Kingdom. When the Dutch-occupied territories were handed over to the British in 1798 and later in 1815 the control of the whole country was taken over by them, the Buddhists as the majority were subjected in more subtle ways to the violations of their rights. However the Buddhists never violated their traditional Buddhist values of tolerance and treated people of all faiths with respect. Therefore I do not see any reason why, with right-understanding by non-Buddhists as well, more inter-faith harmony cannot be built in our country. What is important is not only to co-exist without conflict but also to co-operate actively to combat all evils including crimes and war. Political leaders can then address themselves to the political and economic causes that have brought about the present state of social degeneration and conflict.

Buddhist Approach to Economics

A discussion of society cannot be divorced from a discussion of economics. In order to properly analyse the make-up of a society, it is important to discuss the way that it organizes its economy, the value that it places on different types of economic activity and the morality associated with different economic enterprises. At the time of the Buddha, over 2500 years ago, there was no 'Science' of Economics as we find today. Yet most activities that are studied today under the subject of Economics were going on during his time also, though it was a comparatively primitive economy. There was production, distribution, consumption exchange of goods and services, use of money as a medium exchange, division of labour, profit-making, taxation and

so on. That was a period of economic transition where trade was coming increasingly into a previously agricultural and cattle-breeding economy. In fact there was a new very wealthy class of businessmen who were referred to as setthis.

The State dominated over the ownership of land while trade and industry were in the hands of the private business class. The State got its wealth through taxation while the private sector made money through profit-making, People were generally engaged in agriculture cottage industries and other work that satisfied the basic needs of the community in which they lived. There were others who were employed in state services and in the in the industrial and business enterprises of the private sector.

Undoubtedly the majority of people would have lived a life outside this organized economy which latter day economists called a subsistence economy. A person like myself would venture to call it more or less a self-sufficient and sustainable economy. Certainly there would have been exploitation and poverty in the midst of a generally no-poverty society.

Lord Buddha was a realist and a very practical Teacher. His Mission was not to formulate a model political or economic system. He took for granted the systems that existed during His time and analyzed and showed the flaws in those from a spiritual, moral and ethical point of view. Further He advised them on the correct way of doing things for the development of the personality of the individual human being and the society in general. Whenever he was asked or came across situations where His observations on economic and political matters helped people to improve themselves materially as well as spiritually He never hesitated to guide them on the correct path. Both kings and nobles, setthis and commoners benefited from His teachings.

Buddhism accepts freedom from want. For this economic activities are necessary . Even for monks (Bhikkhus) and nuns (Bhikkhunis) who have renounced house-hold life in search of spiritual pursuits, robes or clothing (civara) food (pindapatha), shelter (senasana) and medicine (gilanapacca) are necessary. Both monks and nuns, and laymen and women, need a conducive environment to live (patirupa desa vasa). Even in the most

primitive societies human beings cannot survive without these basic needs. Buddha appreciated and understood these needs and clearly taught them how to earn their livelihood justly (anavajjani kammani), and how to utilize their earnings for the benefit of oneself and others. As societies developed and production of commodities and services increased then to this portfolio of basic human needs several others were added such as energy requirements, communication, education and cultural needs. As human civilizations advanced more and more in the fields of science and technology certain secondary and tertiary needs were required to be satisfied. Need-based economies were slowly transformed into want-based economies and then, as the modern times approached, especially after the industrial revolution and colonialism, we witnessed how a greed-based economy came into being and expanded in geometrical progression. This has brought about a devastating impact on human society and environment and as we reach the Third Millennium (of the Christian Era) we witness that we are now ready to make a quantum jump into total oblivion. We are examining 'Buddhist Economics' at a critical time like this.

Buddhism, Class and Wealth

Lord Buddha did not preach class antagonism.On the other hand He clearly taught that the greatness of an individual did not depend on his wealth but on his character. The question is not whether an individual is rich or poor but whether he is good or bad, virtuous or sinful. It is one's actions - Kamma - that qualitatively determine the greatness of a person. If one earns wealth by sinful and wrong means such a person does lot of harm to himself and others. True happiness will evade him. Similarly one should spend what one has earned wisely.

Buddha was not against earning wealth the right way, by Right Livelihood (Samma Ajiwa). In fact this is one of the eight steps in the Noble Eight-fold Path. He went on to advise how best to earn wealth. He mentioned vigorous effort and great enthusiasm as essential qualities to be developed by those who want to acquire wealth. The idle can never be rich. Wealth has to be earned by lawful and just means. One who does not strive and remains poor through idleness and lack of enthusiasm is compared by the

Buddha to a person blind in both eyes (Andha). One who becomes rich by wrong means (Micca Ajiwa) is like a person having one eye (eka cakku). One who has become rich by good means is compared to a man with both eyes (dvi cakku).

In the Samyutta Nikaya it is observed that wealth can be earned by three means. (1) Unlawfully and by violence, (2) Unlawfully and lawfully by violence and non- violence, (3) Lawfully and without violence. The third way is advocated as the best to be followed by the wise and those who pursue true happiness. Similarly, a successful businessman will have to develop (1) Skill in buying and selling, (2) A sense of net profit, (3) Ready sources of capital, (4) A service geared to the satisfaction of consumers and (5) diligent work discipline.

In the Vyaggapajja Sutta Buddha advises householders to keep in mind and practice four principles that lead to happiness on earth. Advising Dighajanu who raised the question of householders' happiness on earth Buddha says: (1) Cultivate skills, be efficient, earnest and devoted to your profession (Utthanasampada), (2) Carefully protect what you have earned with your efforts righteously (Arakkhasampada), (3) Associate only with wise,virtuous and good friends (Kalyanamittata), and (4) Live a life of economic evenness and choose the right style of living (Samajivikata).

In Buddhist texts and related literature numerous instances can be found pertaining to making wealth in the right way. Then, what are the wrong ways of earning money? They are by taking away life, by thieving, by deception, by producing by producing and selling intoxicating substances and drugs, poisons and weapons that destroy human and animal life and property and trading in slaves. In Buddhist economics this kind of economic activity is totally unacceptable. However national and world economic statistics are compiled by giving monetary values to this kind of so called 'economic' deeds. Therefore, the GNPs and growth rates which include these are not a true measure of real economic progress of nations.

Buddha's greatest lay disciple was a setthi named Anathapindika. It was he who bought the land and constructed the

famous Jetawana monastery at Savatthi. Anathapindika was a great banker too. Once describing what is happiness for a layman, Buddha mentioned four kinds of happiness to him. Firstly, when by righteous means wealth is acquired and owned by a person there is a great sense of economic security and self-esteem (Atthi-sukha); secondly, the feeling that he could spend that wealth as he wishes on himself, his family, his friends and relatives, his workers and on meritorious deeds (Bhoga-sukha), thirdly, to be free from debts (anana-sukha) and fourthly to live a life of purity in thought word and deed (Anavajja-sukkha). See how Buddha balances the first three, which are economic, with the last which is spiritual.

Buddha spelt out five spheres in which wealth should be spent, namely, for supporting oneself, the family and dependents; helping friends and associates; looking after one's own protection; making offerings to relatives, guests, departed ones,deities, paying state dues and taxes; and supporting the community of monks.

Buddha's Advice on Use of Wealth

A very popular piece of advice by the Buddha about the ways one should get about with earnings is found in the Sigalovada Sutta:

Spend one portion of the earnings for consumption purposes (Ekene Bhoge Bhunjeyya), Invest two portions in business or industry (Dvihi kamman payojaye),

Save one portion to be used if and when in distress (Chatuntampi Nidapeyya, Apadasu Bhavissati)

Buddha in his preachings gave the pride of place to women in managing the household economy. 'She knows the household work best and is capable. She can manage the servants well. She has pleasing ways towards the husband and she guards his wealth. In the Parabhava sutta, four ways of losing wealth are mentioned (Apayamukhani). These are Looseness with women (Ittidutta), debauchery (Suradutta), gambling (Akkhadutta), and evil friends (Papamitta). Again in the Sigalovada sutta, six ways of losing wealth and succumbing to suffering are explained. These are: (1) Addiction to intoxicants (2) Frequenting the streets

at unseemly hours (3) Haunting fairs (4) Getting infatuated by gambling (5) Associating with evil companions and (6) Idle company. Six perils that entail each of these are described in detail.

The first results in loss of wealth, increase in quarrels, susceptibility to disease, loss of reputation and good character, indecent exposure and impaired intelligence. The second causes insecurity to him, his wife, children and property, creates suspicion of crimes, causes false rumours around him, and endless other troubles. The third is a restless mind thinking all the time where dancing, singing, music, recitation, merrymaking etc are going on. The fourth attracts hatred by winning, sadness by losing, wasted life, not trusted in a court of law, despised by officials and friends, not considered to give or take in marriage. The fifth is taking as friends any gambler, libertine, tippler, swindler, cheat, or criminal. Sixth , the idler finds excuses not to work saying it is too early, too late, too cold, too hot, he is too hungry, too full etc and work remains undone, wealth is drained away while getting no income.

From these examples we see scattered throughout the teachings of the Buddha valuable principles relating to production, distribution and consumption of wealth and how it should be done and the right and wrong ways of using it. Underlying all these is the objective of the well-being of the individual person, the family, the community, the entire society and nature. Equal emphasis is given to material as well as spiritual well-being. Therefore the moral laws such as the Kammic Laws of Causality should govern all our activities including the economic.

Labour for Personality Awakening

In Buddhism, human labour is recognized as a fundamental source of wealth. But labour is much more than added monetary value to a natural resource. It transcends the employer-employee relations as far as remuneration is concerned. What is important is every human being engaged in righteous work. Physical work is as important as mental work in the awakening of human personality. Every person has the right to choose the work

according to his feelings and abilities and develop his faculties. When working with other people in bringing about goods and services needed for the well-being of the community a person overcomes his ego-centredness. Buddhism accepts division of labour and specialization but totally rejects the concept of of judging a human being as high and low from the work he does. By birth one does not become a high caste or low caste, but by actions alone one becomes a brahmin or an outcaste. Buddha discarded the caste-oriented employment system. Organizing and training labour, looking into their age, sex, and physical fitness, their contentment, high morality, welfare, leave, medical care, reasonable wages and incentives; and motivation of labour are all mentioned in Buddhist teachings.

Inter-relatedness

Buddha's concern was for all beings, their relationships to one another and nature extending to the entire universal phenomena. Therefore, he laid down five Cosmic (Universal) Laws (Niyama Dhammas) that govern all other man-made laws and therefore should fall within them if human beings are to survive in this world and live in peace and happiness. They are the ones pertaining to the Genes (Bija), Seasons (Utu), Causal chain (Kamma), Phenomena (Dhamma) and Mind (Citta).

State Intervention is Necessary

There are three suttas, namely, the Cakkavattasihanda sutta, Kutadanta sutta and the Agganna sutta detailing economic and political processes that bring about peace and prosperity or conflict and disaster. They are very relevant even today. The entire economic structure can crumble and plunge a country into chaos and destruction if production decreases and there is maldistribution of goods and wealth. This is where State intervention is necessary and remedial action should be taken. A handful of persons are not allowed to hoard the wealth of a country. What is necessary is a holistic approach and not haphazard patchwork. Wealth should not be wasted on festivities and rural wealth should not be drained out to the cities for these festivities. Kutadanta sutta advocates a decentralised monetary system. Natural resources and national wealth should be

preserved and methodical planning and constructive ventures should be implemented. In the same way that when economic changes took place in the form of private property and organized farming, cattle-breeding and industry, there were appropriate administrative and social developments like the election of a King, similarly required and appropriate political measures should be taken to cope with changes that occur in the economic field.

Spirituality at the Centre

One may acquire and use wealth in the right ways yet still be in danger of losing all this from fire, water, kings, robbers, enemies and heirs. Nothing is everlasting. Everything is subject to change. Therefore, Buddha cautions us: Decline follows the man who is proud of his wealth. Wisdom is better than Wealth (Tamahi panna dhanena seyya -Majjima Nikaya). Supreme wealth is Happiness (Santhutti paramam dhanam-Dhammapada).

There is a wealth that is not subject to the above dangers and cannot be taken away by anybody else. These are: Wealth of Faith (Saddhadhana), Wealth of Virtue (Siladhana), Wealth of Conscientiousness (Hiridhana), Wealth of Fear of Blame (Ottappadhana), Wealth of Listening (Sutadhana), Wealth of Beneficence (Cagadhana) and Wealth of Wisdom (Pannadhana).

So far I have dealt with some Buddhist textual material related to the subject of Economics. I have not tried so far to find out how far these are applicable to modern times. Neither have I attempted to compare these teachings with what generally goes as Economic 'Science' today. I put the word science in quote because I am not convinced as it is studied and applied today, that it is a science the way I look at science. Economics today has become increasingly dependent on quantifiable data. There is also over specialization to the neglect of realities which are obvious to our common sense. Most of the predictions of economists do not come to pass. They seem to be more interested in safeguarding their traditional theories and approaches and specialized fields rather than opening out their vista to see and understand the totality of our societies. From Buddhist perspective we always look at totality and plan our approaches to social and economic development. What follows is an outline of an alternative

approach that the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement of Sri Lanka is trying.

Fulfilling Needs in a Buddhist Society

In order to begin to build a Buddhist Society its needs must be identified. This is the best way to build a Buddhist economic system which has the goal of creating a supreme wealth of happiness.

Recently I read a very interesting book by Mr. Shinichi Inoue a former President of Miyazaki Bank in Japan, titled "Putting Buddhism to Work - A New Approach to Management and Business." In Chapter 6 of this book, Buddhist Economics in Commerce and Industry, he says; "If we use the following formula to understand happiness, we can see the difference in the Western and Eastern approaches.

$$\text{Happiness} = \frac{\text{Wealth}}{\text{Desire}}$$

In the West, the general orientation has been to attain happiness by increasing wealth so that one gets *more* of what one desired. In contrast, Buddhism emphasizes the happiness that comes from being detached from desires, i.e. happiness is increased by *reducing* our desires."

In the Sarvodaya Village Development Programme the following Ten Basic Human Needs have been identified. The entire community is organized to satisfy these basic human needs with their own self-reliance and community participation. The following ten basic needs are applicable to the individual, the family and the village community as well.

1. A Clean and Beautiful Environment (Both physical and psychological)
2. A Clean and Adequate supply of Water
3. Simple Requirements of Clothing
4. Balanced Food Requirements
5. A Simple House to live in
6. Basic Health Care
7. Simple Communication Facilities

8. Minimum Energy requirements
9. Total Education
10. Cultural and Spiritual Needs

Without these minimum requirements being fulfilled it is difficult for a householder to devote time wholeheartedly for spiritual development. According to different times and climes, and other factors, these Ten Basic Human Needs, when subdivided into sub-needs may take different forms. There can be as many as 180 sub-needs. For example in a cold climate the clothing or housing requirements may be quite different from that of a tropical place. In Sarvodaya work, members of communities have decided upon sometimes from 15 to 20 sub-needs under each basic human need. The rationale behind the analysis of these basic human needs is the status of the weakest population group in a community and the objective of improving their level of living.

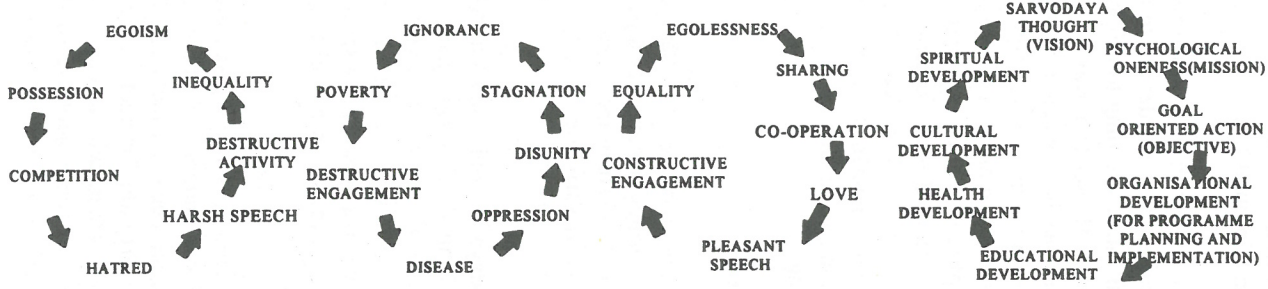
Full Engagement

Employment is not considered by Sarvodaya as a basic human need. Employment brings income for a person, which is used to buy what is required to satisfy the needs. So, employment and income are means of satisfying needs and are not needs by themselves.

Thus in Sarvodaya, 'income' and 'employment' are not central and have only a limited relevance, especially during the initial stages. The aim of production in a village economy is not to accumulate profit but to satisfy the needs of the local community. The criterion Sarvodaya uses is not a speculative exchange value in an unknown market. It is a real use value in their own households.

On the other hand Sarvodaya gives great importance to the engagement of every member of the community in processes related to their basic need satisfaction. Sarvodaya activities at community level provide for such engagement for all age groups. This provides them with an opportunity to be industrious, to co-operate for common benefit, learn skills and understand problems and exercise their minds to seek solutions.

PATH TO VILLAGE RE -AWAKENING
GRAMODAYA



DECADENT VILLAGE	THERE IS A CAUSE	THERE IS A HOPE	THERE IS A WAY

Reversing the Vicious Cycle

Poverty does not exist in isolation. Related to poverty, also ignorance, disease, stagnation, oppression and so on all co-exist. It is vicious cycle. What causes this vicious cycle are a number of inter-related factors. If we are to break this vicious cycle a Cycle of Hope has to be released. This has to be followed by a practical Way. This was of analysis is modelled after Buddha's Four Noble Truths: There is Suffering (Dukkha). There is a Cause to this Suffering (Samudaya). This Cause can be Removed (Nirodha) and There is Way (Magga) of doing this. Graphically this model can be shown on previous page.

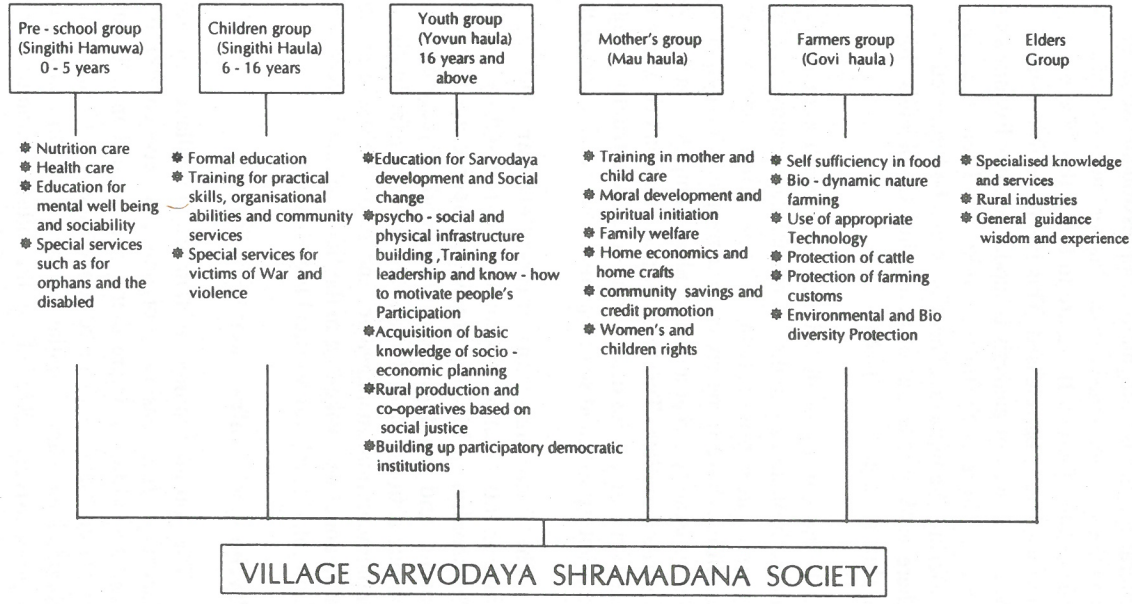
If the causes of decadence start with egoism, possession, competition and so on then to release their opposite forces of non-egoism, non-possession, co-operation and so on correct conditions have to be created for people to participate and work. This is exactly what a Shramadana camp does and it was briefly described earlier. This type of participation brings about hope in the form of egolessness, equality, constructive engagement, pleasant speech and so on opening a new Path to Awaken.

The Path has many inter-related and inter-dependent components such as a Vision as expressed by the Sarvodaya Philosophy, a Mission to which people are psychologically bound and are dedicated, Goals and Objectives determining various actions, and Organisational forms facilitating planning, implementation, management and so on. All these are directed to bring about an awakening in the fields of the Educational, Health, Cultural, Moral and Spiritual life of people.

Psycho -Social Infrastructure Building

The optimum number of families in a village community, that Sarvodaya finds easiest to organise, is between 100 to 150. It is best that villages where there are more than 200 families are organised into two or more sub villages or 'Gamgodas' Through Shramadana camps initial psycho-social infra-structure building is progressively achieved by the village communities. Villagers themselves select one or more of their felt-needs and with their own self- reliance and community participation these needs are

THE SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE IN A SARVODAYA VILLAGE


Pre - school group (Singithi Hamuwa) 0 - 5 years
Children group (Singithi Haula) 6 - 16 years
Youth group (Yovun haula) 16 years and above
Mother's group (Mau haula)
Farmers group (Govi haula)
Elders Group
Nutrition care
Health care
Education for mental well being and sociability
Special services such as for orphans and the disabled
Formal education
Training for practical skills, organisational abilities and community services
Special services for victims of War and violence
Education for Sarvodaya development and Social change
psycho - social and physical infrastructure building ,Training for leadership and know - how to motivate people's Participation
Acquisition of basic knowledge of socio - economic planning
Rural production and co-operatives based on social justice
Building up participatory democratic institutions
Training in mother and child care
Moral development and spiritual initiation
Family welfare
Home economics and home crafts
community savings and credit promotion
Women's and children rights
Self sufficiency in food
Bio - dynamic nature farming
Use of appropriate Technology
Protection of cattle
Protection of farming customs
Environmental and Bio diversity Protection
Specialised knowledge and services
Rural industries
General guidance wisdom and experience
VILLAGE SARVODAYA SHRAMADANA SOCIETY

satisfied.

To begin with, the social (organizational) infrastructure in a village consists of various formations such as the pre-school age children, compulsary school-going age children, out of school youth between the ages 16-26, mothers, adults, farmers and so on. Each formation is related to certain activities which fall within the agenda of basic human needs. This is a stage in village development wherein leadership skills get developed, community leadership potential is discovered, training in vocational skills is given and in general the problems are identified and solutions are sought by the people themselves.

The Social Infrastructure in a Village can be graphically shown on previous page.

Legislation

The various social formations in a village really come of age when the village as a whole is ready to be registered as an incorporated body under the accepted governmental laws. Such a legal entity is called Village Sarvodaya Shramadana Society. It is this organization from then onwards that plays the leading role of awakening the village in all aspects, namely social, economic and political, as well as spiritual, moral and cultural.

It takes time to establish a Village Sarvodaya Shramadana Society. Through practical experience it is found that a village passes through the following stages.

Stage I: Sarvodaya Shramadana Camps in which both villagers from the village itself and other Sarvodaya volunteers from neighbouring villages participate to provide the village with essential services as roads, latrines, wells, tank bunds, irrigation canals, re-forestation programmes etc, with the emphasis on mutual benefit to the community.

Stage 2: Formation of peer groups such as mothers' groups, children's groups, youth groups, farmers' groups and so on and provision of training for them in leadership on child-care, health and sanitation etc so that they can effectively participate in basic needs satisfaction programmes.

Stage 3: Through self- reliance and community participation, satisfaction of basic needs in the village and the formation of a village level Sarvodaya Shramadana Society registered under government regulations capable of giving organized leadership to all village level activities that lead to the improvement of their standard of living.

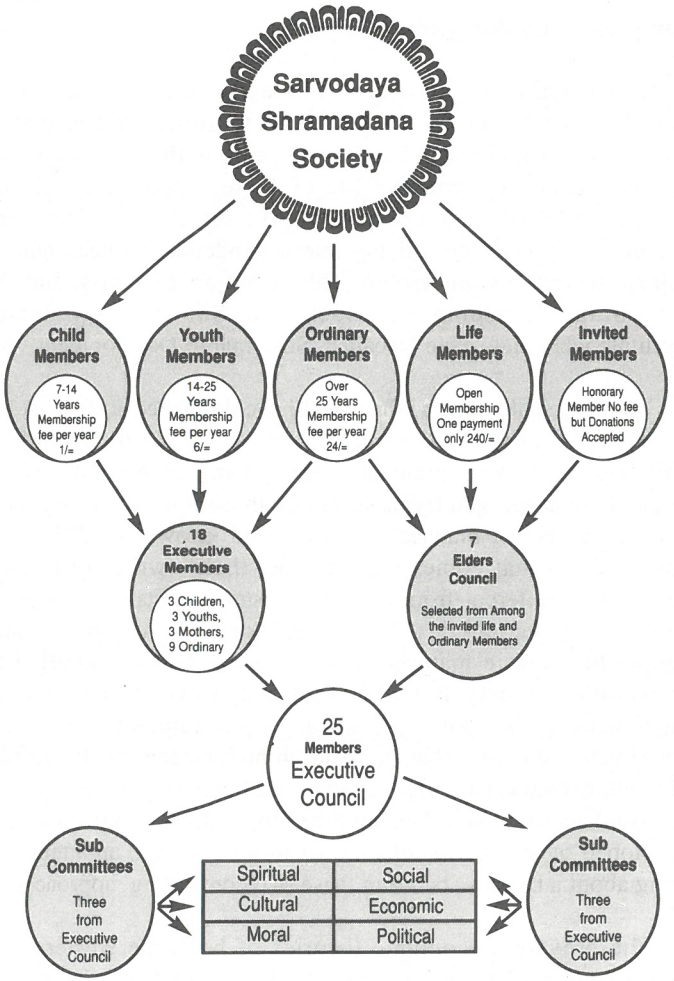
Stage 4: Introduction of Sarvodaya Economic Enterprises Development Services to the village and progressively developing the capacity of the villagers to save, to borrow, to improve the existing enterprises, to start new ones, to repay the loans and evolve their own village development bank.

Stage 5: Building economic relationships with the neighbouring villages, strengthening the capacity in money, products and services so that the latter too could become apart of a cluster of villages along with other clusters of villages in the country contributing to the building of an alternative approach to economic development where the rural areas are benefited.

All Village Sarvodaya Shramadana Societies are governed by a set of rules which the members accept and ratify at the inaugural General Meeting itself. These rules were formulated by competent lawyers subject to the prevailing Constitution of Sri Lanka and other laws of the country. These societies when recognized registered by the Registrar of Societies/Companies have full autonomy to operate as independent legal entities. Today nearly 3000 village societies out of the 11,600, villages where Sarvodaya is active have their own registered societies. Others will soon follow.

Their General Principles (Rule 7) are similar to those of the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement of Sri Lanka which is the principal national Sarvodaya body incorporated by an Act of Parliament (No. 12 of 1972). However the General Objects (Rule 6) cover not only all matters pertaining to basic need satisfaction and village development but also those sectors pertaining to co-ordination with local and central government services, other voluntary and private bodies, industrial, trade and financial matters, but also using even foreign markets to the advantage of rural communities.

Village Sarvodaya Shramadana Society: Organization chart



In the kind of participatory approach to development that Sarvodaya practises, many processes converge on the realization of personal and social awakening Changes in the thinking of people and their attitudes; innovation of methods, techniques and technologies in the execution of basic human needs satisfaction programmes; and evolution and institutionalization of appropriate structures within democratic control of basic communities, are three such sectors that converge harmoniously in this self-development exercise of the people.

Towards a Buddhist Economics

Sarvodaya is not a growth-oriented development as far as growth is dependent on non-renewable resources. Yet economic growth is essential and it has to take place with due acceptance of the rights of all forms of life to the resources of the planet, promoting equal and non-exploitative relationships between human beings and recognizing interdependence between human beings, the society and nature. This is not an easy task. But the Five-Stage development process that Sarvodaya practises facilitate what may even be called Sustainable Development.

You may realize from whatever I have described so far that the Sarvodaya approach to development based on Buddhist Philosophy is a very pragmatic one starting with what people know they need, and trying to satisfy those with what they have both in respect of material resources and know-how. Whatever outside help that comes supplements their own efforts. This approach is different from both the western capitalist economics and Marxist economics. Sarvodaya not only recognizes that people have basic material needs that have to be satisfied to overcome poverty but also that the methods applied in implementing the poverty eradication programmes should also not violate the norms that are held in high esteem by the people. The ethical values and right conduct are necessary to satisfy their spiritual aspirations. The methodology that Sarvodaya has developed over a period of four decades is, in fact, an attempt to bring about a balance between these two conflicting approaches.

The prevalent economic theories of both the western and Marxist brands are well developed, documented and have been

practised over a long period of time. An approach like that of Sarvodaya has a long way to go before it can build up a clear economic theory and practice which one may call Buddhist Economics. Even building up a distinct terminology to clearly express what we mean and make it intelligible to others is a time-consuming task. So we have to use the existing economic language and even the current divisions such as micro economics, macro-economics and also specialized subjects like public finance in our work. We also have to operate and do our work within the existing laws of the country and the administrative and financial frameworks. When it comes to statistical computations and measures we are at a great disadvantage when compared with those of the traditional current econometricians as our tools have yet to be developed. In spite of these constraints the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement is striving to build a working model. What was described so far is the foundation of such a model.

For example Sarvodaya does not consider the classical factors of production such as Land, Labour, Capital and Entreprenurship as those that have to be used merely to create wealth. We look at these and other related resources as important for the survival, sustainability and well-being of not only our generation but also future generations and the other living beings and nature itself. Therefore. when Sarvodaya gets into economic activities, issues such as profit, speculation, hoarding, competitiveness, shares and stock markets and so on become of secondary importance. The main concern is satisfaction of basic needs, secondary needs and tertiary needs, in that order, through Right Livelihood in a Full-Engagement society.

The concerns of governments, private sector bodies and international political and economic institutions are different. They are guided by concepts of globalization, market economies, full-employment, sustainable growth and so on. However, these are the leading forces in societies and even a movement for radical non-violent social change such as Sarvodaya has to act within the limitations imposed by them. It is in this context that we have to devise ways and means, innovate methods and technologies, and build new institutions to co-exist with them without getting co-opted, to carry on with our programmes.

Sarvodaya Early Childhood Development Programme, Sarvodaya Women's Movement, Sarvodaya Legal Services Movement, Sarvodaya Peace Brigades Movement, Sarvodaya Rural Technical Services, Sarvodaya Economic Enterprises Development Services, Sarvodaya Community Health Services, Sarvodaya Bio-diversity and Environmental Conservation Programme and Sarvodaya Suwa Setha Services Society are such innovative institutions and programmes all of which merge together at the level of the village to build the alternative society. The village movement itself which has now 11,600 villages at different stages of the five-stage development scheme is aimed at Gram Swarajya or village self-government.

Each village strives to satisfy its basic needs. Then a cluster of ten villages come together to satisfy their secondary needs. Then several clusters at divisional, district and national levels strive to influence the local, provincial and central governments in policies and decisions that would ultimately satisfy their secondary and tertiary needs. So the task of Sarvodaya is two-fold. It has to go on with its poverty eradication programmes on one hand and on the other hand develop a conceptual as well as a methodical- institutional framework in the light of practical experience. This entails an educational programme aimed not only at the village communities but also at those who wield political and administrative powers at divisional, district, provincial and national levels. Establishment of correct rapport with persons and institutions at all these levels has to be done at all times.

Towards a Buddhist Society

As one may understand, and is being proven by the Sarvodaya experience, there is a possibility of bringing about social and economic development on the principles of Buddhism. A Buddhist approach to development therefore:

1. -is based on self- reliance and community participation at all stages
2. -is always founded on ethical principles and not purely on maximization of profit and endless growth bringing about environmental pollution, ecological imbalances, indebtedness,

vast disparities in income and promoting an affluent life style for a few;

3. -generates internal dynamism within communities and countries while external support, if received, is only to promote that dynamism
4. -starts with what they have and what they know and not with what they do not have and do not know
5. -utilizes the principle of using one portion of one's income for consumption, investing two portions and saving one portion for an emergency situation advocated by the Buddha which is an excellent principle to be followed by communities and countries
6. -enables women to play a leading role in the fields of savings and credit, food production and storage, education and social welfare, and they are always given equal status;
7. -encourages people's participatory development which in its essence is an exercise in participatory democracy enabling people to manage their own affairs
8. -provides plenty of room for private initiative while compatible co-operative systems are developed not only within communities but even with clusters of communities
9. -bases technological advancements on local technologies which are under the control of the people
10. works toward total devolution and decentralization of political and economic power to local communities so that imposition of oppressive systems of governance, economic exploitation and imposition of dominant cultures on people are minimized.

Today, as we switch over to the 21st century we are in a position to do this globally better than at any other time in known history because of the high advancement in the field of communication technology. We no longer need centralization of power in any sector of human development.

Lord Buddha rejected ideologies that condition the minds of people, divide them into various factions and which at the end result in conflicts within nations and between nations. He advocated a Vision based on compassion for all (Metta). A myriad of ideologies have brought about ethnic violence not only in poor countries but also in economically developed countries. The recent nuclear tests in India and Pakistan are examples of even

poor countries trying to depend more on destructive physical power rather than the power of Dharma or Righteousness. Emperor Asoka abandoned violence after the Kalinga war and launched what was known as Dharma Vijaya, that is winning the hearts of people in neighbouring countries purely through a vision based on his conviction "All humans are my children" (Save Munise Paja Mama). He not only achieved national unity of the Indian sub continent but sent special envoys called "Dharmamahamathras" to spread the Dharma Vijaya principles to far off countries such as Syria, Egypt, Epires, Palestine, Macedonia, Cyrene and Alexandria. He also sent missions headed by enlightened monks to all neighbouring countries such as Burma, Siam and Sri Lanka. It is recorded in Mahavansa that for the foundation-laying ceremony of Ruwanveliseya in Anuradhapura thousands of Arahats from even modern Iran and Iraq attended the celebrations. As peace prevailed in those times civilizations flourished and very high levels in the fields of Art and Architecture, irrigation and water management, agriculture and, fine arts and crafts were reached.

If the would follows Buddha's teachings of rejecting ideologies and accepting the vision of working for the well-being and awakening of all, there lies the way to peace and happiness. Before coming to a conclusion, I must emphasize one fact: that in Buddhist approach to development no other religion or belief is left out or discriminated against. In Rock Edict XII of Dharmashoka he emphasized religious unity and advocated that teachers of other religions also should be venerated. "Other Sects had to be duly honoured in every case. If one is acting thus he is promoting his own Sect and benefiting others." He also said "Concord indeed is commendable." (Samavayo eva sadhu). We in Sri Lanka, Siam, Burma, and other Buddhist country should set an example to the world by following a Buddhist approach to social and economic development to make of Buddha's vision, a reality in the 21st century.

(Dr. A. T. Ariyaratne is the Founder and President of the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement of Sri Lanka which is dedicated to translating Buddha's teachings into development practice especially in rural communities for the last four decades.)

RELEVANCE OF MAHATMA GANDHI FOR THE TWENTY FIRST CENTURY

Mr. Chairman - His Excellency Shivshankar Menon, High Commissioner of India, Mr Tilak de Zoysa, President of the Sri Lanka India Society, Mr. Nimalasiri de Silva, the Vice President, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am honoured to have been called upon to deliver the Mahatma Gandhi Oration this year. Thank you for this kind gesture.

Today is the 129th birth anniversary of Gandhiji. His life and mission were brought to a sudden end by a fanatic's bullet just over 50 years ago. If he was spared at least for two more decades perhaps he would have guided the newly freed people of India, Sri Lanka and other countries of this region in the art and science of building total freedom for all on the two principles of Truth and Non- violence.

I am asked to speak on the **Relevance of Gandhiji for The Twenty First Century.** Gandhiji like any other human being was mortal. But the eternal principles he experimented with and successfully applied to deal with a variety of problems, both personal, and national are valid at all times for civilized life. In his own words Truth and Non-violence are as old as the Himalayas. Each generation of people has to engage itself evolving new methods and techniques founded on these principles to grapple with problems it is faced with changing times. This is an ongoing process which will last as long as human beings, the thinking beings, survive on this planet.

After a life time of selfless service to his people when Gandhi attended his last meeting of the Congress Working Committee he expressed his unhappiness over the acceptance of the Mountbatten Plan for transfer of power along with partition of India. He asked " Why do you accept India's freedom with partition of the country? " I quote from Madhu Dandavate, as related by him in

the book Gandhi in The Global Village, the rest of the story.

> So all the elder leaders said: " What to do? There is civil war and bloodshed." Gandhi's reply was: 'Are you a greater votary of non-violence than myself? I too believe in Non-violence. I abhor violence but I will not be cowed down by violence. This is the difference between you and me. Be prepared for one more struggle for India's liberation and we will have united India's freedom. But he said: "Perhaps you have lost your will to fight. Go your own way." And then the President of the Congress said: "Gandhiji had expressed his views very clearly. Now it is not worthwhile to ask him to stay over in the Working Committee." And then Gandhi left.
>
> In one of his musings in the prayer meeting he said : "They have no use for this old man. Oh God ! Pick me up as early as possible."

In my opinion it was at this point that Gandhiji realized that his role as the leader and the unifying force of the national political liberation struggle of India was over. Short sighted and men of lesser moral fiber, anxious to fill the power vacuum to be left over by the British, had taken over the destiny of a divided Nation. They would compensate Gandhiji by calling him the Father of the Nation. This empty title meant nothing for Gandhiji who was a living manifestation of a synthesis of a total renunciate of worldly life and a pragmatic idealist bent on building a Ram Raj with his people. For Gandhiji it was unthinkable of launching a Satyagraha at this late age of his life against the decision of the Congress Working Committee. Such an action would have plunged the country into greater chaos as the teeming millions of the non-elite, both Hindus and Muslims, would have still followed him. So Gandhiji had no choice but to prepare for his death as he wrote in Harijan on 28th January 1948 just two days before his death.

> "If I am to die by the bullet of a mad man, I must do so smiling. There must be no anger within me. God must be in my heart and on my lips. And you promise me one thing. Should such a thing happen, you are not to shed one tear."

Another incident worth recollecting is the way Gandhi responded to the request made to a special emissary sent by the Hon Prime Minister Pundit Jawaharlal Nehru and Deputy Prime Minister Hon. Sardar Vallabhai Patel for Gandhiji, as the Father of the Nation, to attend the historic midnight declaration of independence on 14th August 1947. Before Gandhi took to his hands and opened the letter sent by those two dignitaries , the human being Gandhi inquired whether the emissary had taken his food. When he said no, he served him food and then only took the letter and opened it. Gandhi said, "Do they want me to be in the capital of Delhi when Bengal is bleeding, Hindus and Muslims are killing each other and when blood is flowing on the streets of Bengal?" He continued, "My work will be in the darkness in Bengal. I will try to strive for peace and if need be die for the cause."

So, he did not attend the first Independence Day festivities and when the second Independence Day came he was already dead for over four months. Madhu Dandawati vividly describes how Gandhiji gave the emissary a farewell.

> "Gandhiji was standing below a tree. A dry leaf from the tree fell down. Gandhiji picked up the dry leaf, put it on the palm of his hand and told the emissary, "You are going back to Delhi. Gandhi without power and without wealth - what gift can he give to Prime Minister Nehru? Carry this dry leaf on the palm of your hand as my first Independence Day Gift" and when he was saying this tears trickled down from the eyes of the emissary and they fell on the dry leaf. Gandhi said, "How great is God. He does not want Gandhi to send a dry leaf as his first Independence Day Gift and therefore He moistened it with your tears. Look at the leaf which is looking quite fresh and is glistening with laughter."

Gandhi of course went back to Calcutta in the darkness to establish peace. He walked from village to village and ultimately peace was established.

On 26th August 1947 in a letter to Gandhiji Lord Mountbatten said, "While 55,000 soldiers were trying to control large scale

riots in Punjab there is a One Man Boundary Force which has prevented rioting in Bengal."

In spite of the new leaders of India giving up the primacy of faith in the spirituo-moral force that Gandhiji promoted all his life and their turning to western systems of building a modern and powerful western type of democratic state, where physical and material aspects were given more prominence, Gandhiji on his part continued on his avowed path of building a Sarvodaya social order in India. He was furthest from seats of power and was with the poor masses. He wanted to bring Swaraj to every village, to every human being and to all people alike. I am sure, known and felt only by himself, his heart would have glistened with laughter at those westernisers at one moment, while it would have bled with sadness at the next moment when he thought of the consequences of what they were doing for the poor in the future. Yet he did not live long with this inner sorrow.

As I see, it is a sad fact that India was split into two. It is a sadder fact that the leadership of the Indian freedom struggle which successfully led a mass non-violent movement was also split into two in the post-independent India. Ideological differences in a democratic society are understandable. But not paying sufficient heed to Gandhiji's vision that united diverse groups to forge into a national force capable of over-powering the strongest and largest empire the world had yet known was a tragedy. If the mass awakening of the people was sustained and properly guided India would have not only become the model for the Twenty First Century but also would have contributed to blaze a new trail for those countries, may be over 120 of them, which gained political freedom following the liberation of India.

I am not trying to underestimate the sacrifice and contribution made by the leaders who took over the reins of government at that stage and built India into a modern democratic state, the largest democracy in the world. India today is second to none in its physical, scientific, technological and organizational achievements. I am only questioning the incompleteness of this exercise which lacked the vision and missionary spirit which dominated the independence struggle. Where is the soul of India? Where are the people, tens of thousands of those poor and the

hungry whose mass participation and sacrifices were the key factors that led to freedom? Where is that global moral influence that inspired the non-violent struggles of Martin Luther King, Petra Kelly, Nelson Mandela, and scores of others in all continents?

Let me recall from a letter that Gandhi wrote to Jawaharlal Nehru in 1945:

"I am convinced that if India is to attain true freedom and through India the world also, sooner or later, the fact must be recognized that people have to live in small face to face communities or villages. Crores of people will never be able to live at peace with each other in cities and palaces."

He added "You must not imagine that I am envisaging our village life as it is today. My ideal village will contain intelligent human beings. They will not live in dirt and darkness as animals. Men and women will be free and able to hold their own against anyone in the world. No one will be idle, no one will wallow in luxury. Everyone will have to contribute his quota of manual labour. I do not want to draw a large scale picture in detail. I can very well envisage all modern conveniences like railways, post and telegraphs, etc. in village communities. For me it matters to obtain the real core and the rest will fit themselves of their own accord. If I let go the real thing all else goes."

This was the thinking of Gandhiji. I venture to say this would have been the thinking of Lord Buddha over 2500 years ago when he praised the village republics of the Vajjins and the Liccavis. In 1907 Gokhale declared that "our real local self-government should start with villages and stop with sub-districts." Gandhiji went further and spoke of India becoming a 'Commonwealth of Village Republics.'

I referred to the split in the leadership after independence. What I meant was not the divisions that were brought about by party politics, religious, caste or ethnic differences. They were and even today are a curse in our societies. There were those who took over from the British and wielded the political and administrative, in short, the governmental power - Rajya Shakthi. Then there were the freedom fighters who did not accept paid

office or authority but continued to sacrifice themselves even after independence to bring real freedom as Gandhiji conceived to all citizens of free India, specially to those who were the lowest, the lowliest and the lost.

At least from 1956 onwards to this day I have observed the latter category of people slowly receding into the backstage and losing their dynamism specially after the demise of Acharya Vinoba Bhave and Shri Jayaprakash Narayan. I must hasten to add that all are not lost as there are a few elders with the same sacrificial spirit of Gandhiji and an increasing number of young educated leaders who are trying to revive the Gandhian spirit to make a difference in the Indian society. As we approach the new millenium the wisest thing to do, in my opinion, is to take stock of the experiences in the past five decades and come to an understanding where both state power or Rajya Shakthi and people's power or Jana Shakthi can pursue the same ideal or vision for the good of whole society.

If humanity is to survive and sustain itself in the coming century state power should progressively be replaced by people's power. This is not an easy task. It demands a total transformation of human consciousness, our attitudes, our social political and economic structures, the way we use technology, our interpersonal relationships and our interdependence with one another and the nature around us. This is a challenge that we in Sri Lanka and India should courageously accept for the sake of humanity if we truly respect the Mahatma.

Please permit me to deviate a little from the trend of my presentation so far to bring Gandhi closer to Sri Lankan situation. In 1927 Gandhiji was in Sri Lanka for three weeks. On many occasions though he said that he came to Ceylon purely as a mercenary to sell Khadi and collect donations for the starving millions in India, the short speeches he made in the South, the Central Hills and the North, to students, labourers, traders, religious groups, women, Indian migrants, lawyers and professionals and so on reveal the far-seeing nature of Gandhiji. Here was a visionary who forewarned us six decades ago what was to come if we did not heed his words and acted in certain ethical ways. To save time and give you an opportunity to digest

his thoughts given to Sinhalese, Tamils, Muslims, Buddhists, Christians and others at that time I have brought a book which is published by Sarvodaya Vishva Lekha and which we are releasing today. This was written by Mahadev Desai and was first published by S.Ganesan, Triplicane, Madras in 1928. The name of the book is With Gandhiji in Ceylon. I wish to remember with gratitude on this occasion one of the finest products of Hindu culture in Sri Lanka, patriot and Gandhian, the late Mr.Sivasubramaniam, attorney-at-law, who gave this precious book to me over two decades ago with the promise of bringing out a new edition. We are not giving this book to you free. The price marked is almost the cost. But in the spirit of Gandhiji in 1927 I am appealing to you to give a donation over and above the marked price when you buy this book which will go into the Bangladesh Relief Fund which we in Sarvodaya and Friends of Bangladesh have instituted to assist our brothers and sisters in that country who have suffered the worst floods in their history.

Let me come back again to the subject of Relevance of Gandhi today. When we survey the global scenario what do we see? Let us start with ourselves, a sort of bottom-up look. Human personality is generally torn asunder in every aspect. This is affecting not only the human being but also the family, school community, neighbourhood, villages and cities, seats of higher learning, quality of professions, work places, religious communities, nations and even the world as whole and its life-support systems. This is a vicious interactive cycle and has a multiplying effect engulfing the entire living systems and the social fabric in violent and destructive processes.

Looking at it from above everything that has to do with life and living on this planet appears to be a formidable problem. This too is not a simple or a localized one. It is of global proportions. It can affect the poor Bangladesh as well as the affluent Florida. While we humans are poised against each other with all the hatred and armaments including the nuclear weaponry nature has declared war on us. Referring to the dropping of the Atom bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki Mahatma Gandhi stated:

> "The moral to be legitimately drawn from the supreme tragedy of the bomb is that it will not be destroyed by

counter-bombs even as violence cannot be by counter-violence. Mankind has to get out of violence only through non-violence. Hatred can be overcome only by love. Counter-hatred only increases the surface as well as depth of hatred."

We, the humans, are a strange species . Any other life form through their instinctive capacity would first restructure itself organically to survive themselves as a species first before trying to survive oneself whatever happens to the others. Long before modern science put before us the principle of inter-dependence, Lord Buddha preached the principle of what is known as "Paticca Samuppada" or Dependent Origination. We talk of the thinning of the ozone layer, depletion of non-renewable energy resources, global warming. On a more mundane level we talk of poverty, unemployment , over consumption, problems of women and children and so on. We mostly lose sight of the inter-relatedness of all this.

Like the Buddha and other great teachers Gandhiji looked at all these problems as a whole. This is the reason why he gave great importance to every detail, to the development of human personality. He never talked of human resource development for which there are even ministries in various countries. We have forgotten the fact that we are the trustees of everything on this planet, including our own lives. The Ashram life, the new education system or Nai Talim, manual labour, promotion of Khadi and village crafts, holding on to truth in situations of grave injustice (Satyagraha) without an element of hate towards the oppressor, meditation and prayer meetings and long walks with the people into locations of violent conflict and the continuous constructive programmes were the methodology used by Gandhi primarily to awaken human personalities who are the most critical elements in building justice, peace, equality and good life for all. Can we think of any official governmental programme for human personality awakening of this nature in that same spirit?

The ultimate result of neglecting this aspect of human development is enthroning in the minds and hearts of even growing children that, "Pursuit of self-interest is the best path to happiness and contentment." This kind of evil thought is implanted with great

expense and efforts by official approach to a so called economic development to realize the objective of a full employment society. Once this thought is implanted competition instead of co-operation and mutuality spreads like a cancer in the whole social body. Respected traditional values, cultural norms, blood relationships, fear to break laws, shame to engage in corrupt immoral practices are no barriers once competition takes over every aspect of our religious, cultural, social, political and economic life.

While private enterprise plays a key role in this process with the patronage of the State and the inter-governmental agreements such as those relating to Globalization and World Trade Organization, the quality of the human being, the family and the community degenerates into a chaotic state. Effect of violence in all aspects of one's life becomes such an obvious reality, new sciences are developed and research institutions are established to monitor the magnitude of the problem of violence. Children's and Women's Charters are ratified at international conferences. Governments pass more and more legislation to counteract these undesirable trends.

It is a very sad commentary on our state and processes of development if we have to pass laws to protect our own children from their own elders and create a special authority to implement the laws. Have we not gone wrong somewhere? I do not believe that laws and more powers to the state to enforce them are the answers to our problems. We have to transform people in the manner that Gandhiji did and revive the inner moral, spiritual forces which should guide the lives of people.

The state response to social evils is enacting more laws and more and more statutory bodies to enforce the laws. This is typical of state responses to problems the people are faced with. Some of the problems people face are in fact caused by the state which now apparently controls very many aspects of our lives. There is no doubt that the state should provide certain services which are needed and which are now beyond the family and the community to provide.

A good example is education. It is no longer possible for a family or a community to provide an education for a child which

is needed nowadays. But should this mean that the family and the community have absolutely no say in the education provided by the state? I think that the education of a child should be a partnership between the state, the family and the community. The state should not be the only decision-maker in a matter of such critical importance. What one sees now is the dominance of the state with little freedom to individuals, families and communities. We are living not under eternal moral and spiritual laws but laws enforced by the power and dominance of the state.

Is the state what it should be? Mahatma Gandhi was very much alive to the dangers to our lives arising from state dominance. I believe that what he feared has come to pass. The concept of state power dominating our everyday life has now to be extended by the emergence of multi-nationals and inter-governmental organizations which are increasingly able not just to influence but even to control our lives. A traditional farmer may now not grow "Basmati" rice because some foreign company has got a patent for it.

Industrialization has contributed to the dominance of the state and of multi-national and inter-government organizations. Industrialization of poor countries was at the highest point in the agenda of poverty eradication for several decades now. But the poor continue to remain with us. There is a misconception that Gandhiji was against science, technology and industrialization. Even certain scholars who turn cynics as a result of embracing industrialism and lose their intuitive wisdom are quick to dismiss anyone who talks of love, compassion, forgiveness and in short anything that goes under the name of spirituality as worthless idealists. Gandhi was ridiculed in this manner when he was living and even today 50 years after his death.

Even a great leader like Winston Churchill refused to see Gandhi as did the Pope a few months later. Winston Churchill who made a very strong attack on the Labour Government for surrendering power and granting freedom to India said, in the House of Commons, "We built the glory of British Empire in India for 150 years and you have destroyed it by surrendering before non-violence of Gandhi." Prime Minister Atlee in his reply to Winston Churchill mentioned that the British Empire survived

in India for 150 years not because of the support of the Indian people but because of their army and the navy. He also mentioned that Gandhi's philosophy was "Hate the sin. Not the sinner."

Industrialism has to be countered while the right kind of industrialization as appropriate to people in different climes, locations, societies and countries will have to be intelligently promoted. Industrialization should not throw people out of employment. Industrialization should not make workers cogs in the whole system destroying their self-respect, freedom and creativity as is happening in some of our Free Trade Zones. People should control industrialization and the vice a versa should not happen. It should not destroy the craftsmen but rather assist them to do a more refined creative work. While basic needs of people have to be satisfied industrialization should not result in creating artificial markets and promoting wasteful consumerism. Pursuit of pleasure by the affluent few not stopping even at drug promotion and addiction among the people to maximize their money income should be counteracted. Gandhiji spoke many times even in Sri Lanka that we should not rush to a western style of living like moths getting attracted to a fire.

Gandhiji had a vision which had he lived long enough to make it a reality we may not have had these problems. As power cannot be distributed like wealth it should not be concentrated in the hands of a few. Whatever name we give to the democratic systems we have, with the intrusion of power and party politics in our societies we cannot look up to any institution of power be it the executive the legislature or the judiciary as institutions of highest purity and integrity. In many countries more than a negligible number of persons who belong to these institutions have been proven guilty of crimes ranging from corruption to mass murder. The fault is not in those individuals. The fault is the system of governance that gave so much of power to the governments. Centralized power in the hands of governments with added power from international market wielders including those who manufacture and sell arms and an increasingly deadly military machinery is not the best instrument to eradicate poverty and build justice and peace. So, Gandhiji's advocacy of decentralized power should be the model for the 21st century.

A revolution in the communication technology is taking vast strides in the modern world. This can be as disastrous as industrialization and globalization to the poor and peace loving people in the world unless this technology is put at the disposal of face to face community units the world over. The power to resist evil in a form of recreated Satyagraha of global application can be created if the communication technology is in the hands of the people. Such a networking process can be the greatest deterrent for many evils of the present day world such as religious fanaticism, communalism, drug trade, organized crime, civil war and even inter-state conflicts. This kind of totally decentralized communication system will be more effective to maintain peace in communities, nations and the world than the actions of five permanent members of the UN Security Council who not only control the nuclear arsenal but also are the biggest manufacturers of conventional weapons which are used in our countries.

In the 21st century, the trusteeship philosophy of Gandhiji will be more applicable than at the time he expounded this theory. Trusteeship can be exercised with regard to capital, labour, technology and even power. This concept can only be translated into workable and organized programmes if the young and the old alike are given opportunities to live and work in a spiritual environment for certain periods of time in their life. Gandhiji established the Phoenix Ashram and the Tolstoy Farm when in South Africa and later in India other Ashrams like the Sabarmathi and Sewagram ashrams. It is in these places that constructive workers and freedom fighters got their training in community living. shared labour, equality in association, food habits and healthy living, skills in using one's limbs in cottage industrial and agricultural sectors, environment protection and enrichment, organizing communities for self-reliance self-sufficiency and self-government, simplicity and humility, non-violent struggles against injustices, meditation and prayer.

In India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Thailand, Japan, USA, England and most other countries in the world such places still do exist by whatever name they are called. Relevant to the modern times and challenges, with appropriate technologies, a network of these centres can be revived and reorganised and thrown open to the students and the public alike under able guidance. They should not

be controlled by governments, paid national or intergovernmental bureaucrats, consultants and experts. They can be financially and otherwise supported by governments but selfless voluntary leaders must look after them. Government and private sector organizations can give paid leave for the staff members to come and spend one to two weeks at these New Millenium Education Centres, if you call them so.

On our part we are just completing the construction of such a New Millenium Education Centre called Vishva Niketan - Universal Home. All the monies I received from the Niwano Peace Prize from Japan and the Gandhi Peace Prize from India, along with the only piece of land I possessed were donated to build this complex. A couple of others also made generous contributions. With a little more help Vishva Niketan will be completed and placed at the service of servants of humanity who want to sacrifice themselves to build a new non-violent, non-exploitative, non-polluted and peaceful social order.

Another experimental and training ground for an alternative Gandhian type social order is the villages. In our own country we have worked for over four decades on these principles with very successful results. Today over 3000 villages out of the 11600 villages where we are working can be transformed into such training grounds not only for people of our country but also for young people from other countries.

Among many dedicated leaders who incessantly worked to keep the Gandhian ideal alive were Acharya Vinoba Bhave and Shri Jayaprakash Narayan. Through the Bhoodan-Gramdan Movement which extended into thousands of villages Vinobaji proved that trusteeship in land is a workable proposition. Jayaprakashji proved beyond any doubt that a Sarvodaya polity can be realized in practice if the leaders are serious about it. He revived the idea of the Lok Sewak Sangha that Gandhi had elaborated in his last will and testament and presented to the Congress in January 1948 recommending the dissolution of the Congress organization. Gandhiji wanted the establishment of a body of voluntary workers working in villages and acting as inspirers and organizers for people's power so that Swaraj moves from the centre to the village level. He very clearly presented an

alternative to the party and power political system that had corroded the very edifice of democratic values.

Shri K.S. Narayanaswamy has summarized Vinobaji's concept of Gram Swaraj (one to four) and Jayaprakashji's views (five to ten) as follows:-

1. All judicial, administrative, municipal and educational responsibility in the revenue jurisdiction of the village should belong to the Gram Sabha of village assembly of which every adult living in the area is a member.
2. All agricultural land which is the primary instrument of production shall belong to the collective ownership of the village with right of distribution among the working class of the village.
3. Application of the principles of the economics of the family to the village community for total development, full employment and maximum opportunities for raising the quality of life.
4. For all purposes of inter-relationships between groups and district units and upwards till the national level the village community elects unanimously its own representatives without the interference of either the State or political parties.
5. An awakened village community is the best organically related social unit for working out a reconstruction from the base.
6. Organize people's power based on non-violence and Satyagraha will be the best guarantee for non-erosion of democratic values.
7. Grama Sabhas, Lok Samithis, Lok Sangarsh Vahinis (Youth organization for revolution), Lok Sevakas are the essential parts of a basic infrastructure for Loka Nithi.
8. Accountability of all representatives to their constituencies and the right to recall .
9. Parties wither away as power comes to be decentralized and decision making bodies are directly with the people and their local organizations for implementing of those decisions.
10. The State shall convert itself into a federating mechanism of self regulated communities with responsibilities of shaping national policies and preserving national unity.

The above ten principles are quite in line with Gandhiji's words on democracy:

"Democracy should necessarily mean in essence the art and science of mobilizing the entire physical, economic and spiritual resources of all the sections of the people in the service of the common good of all."

Dr N. Radhakrishnan, the Director of Gandhi Samirti and Dharshan Samiti and International Centre for Gandhian Studies and Research has quoted in a recent book "Gandhi in the Global Village" he edited with Dr. N. Vasudevan the following alarming statistics released by the National Center of Education Statistics of the Department of Education in Washington D.C.

- 100,000 children take a gun to school every day (Children's Defense Fund says as many as 135,000).
- 16,000 children abstain from school every day because of fear of injury (320,000 per month).
- 2,000 young people attacked before every hour in a working day (282,000 per month; 14,100 per day).
- 900 teachers threatened and nearly 40 attacked per hour (125,000 threatened each month; 8,250 threatened per day; 5,200 physically attacked each month; 260 per day; 37 per hour).
- Every 36 minutes - a child killed or injured by a firearm (over 14,000 per year).
- During 1986-1990 250 hostage incidents - using guns - in 35 States.

This is what is happening in the most affluent country the world has yet seen. This is the type of affluent social order towards which most countries including ours are striving. Already, in our own country we are witnessing unprecedented crimes at personal and organized levels. Violence in the family, against women and children, in work places and schools, by armed gangs, economic and political violence, by the police, prisons and armed forces, and terrori ts are on the increase in our country. A civil war, the end of which cannot be yet sighted is going on. In short there is an urgent need in our country for the civil society to awaken to this serious problem and develop techniques based on Gandhian principles of Truth and Non-

violence. These should include non-violent methods for prevention, conflict resolution, security, democratic structural change, defense and rehabilitation of traumatized people and victims of violence and building trust and confidence. It has to be an integrated and total approach.

If I do not express some of my thoughts on the civil war you may wonder why I did so. So, I will make a few remarks before I conclude this speech.

Firstly, there are those who say that the war must go on to the very end and there is no way it can be stopped. Secondly, there are others who say there should be peace talks conditional or unconditional. Thirdly, there are those who believe that the devolution of power from the centre to the provinces or regions under a new Constitution is the only solution. Newspapers and other electronic media abound with opinions, debates, discussions and deliberations on these different approaches to bring about an end to the war in our country. Sometimes, along these three lines there are additional suggestions made. What is lacking in my opinion is sufficient positive and non-violent action in all the above mentioned sectors.

Meanwhile, hundreds of lives are lost. Thousands are maimed. Numerous families are becoming destitute. Resources that could have been used for people's welfare are wasted. In spite of this tragedy the affluent few are enjoying their life and are becoming more affluent and insensitive to the sufferings of people.

Is there no other way to stop the war? I believe there is. That is the Gandhian way. That is non-violent, direct action, in and outside the battle field. There should be action in every home and in every community, to transform the consciousness of the human beings from a culture of alienation, vindictiveness and violence to one of togetherness, forgiveness and non-violence. Are there courageous and self-sacrificing people who are prepared to take these positive actions to the conflict zones and battlefields? I say yes. Then what prevents them from doing it? I think I leave it best to you to find the answer.

(Mahatma Gandhi Oration delivered By Dr. A. T . Ariyaratne at Taj Samudra. Sponsored by Sri Lanka India Society October 2, 1998)

INTERNATIONAL MEMORIAL SERVICE TO HONOUR THE LIFE AND WORK OF DR. M. ARAM M.P.

Mrs. Minoti Aram, Dr. Vinu Aram,
Trustees and members of the Shanthi Ashram,
Dr. N. Mahalingam, Rev. M. Nagamuna, Dr. William Vendley,
Rev. M. Miyake and other distinguished guests,
ladies and gentlemen.

It is with a profound sense of personal grief I stand before you to speak a few words in memory of Dr. M. Aram.

Fourteen months ago in Vienna after attending a meeting of the Interaction Council he walked with me to the taxi I was taking to the airport, wished me and was waving at me till I disappeared from his sight. On that occasion not even in my wildest dreams would I have thought that he would part from us so suddenly a few days later. He was so hale and hearty, cheerful and serious at the same time when he made several interventions at the Interaction Council meeting when we discussed about getting the United Nations to add a chapter to its Convention on Human Responsibilities. Dr. Helmut Schmidt, President of the Interaction Council, which comprises many ex-Heads of States, had tremendous respect for the words of wisdom he always brought into the discussion. With the latest amendments to the Indian Constitution in his hand very lucidly he explained the importance of human responsibilities along with human rights that governments and people should exercise. Like everything that is conditioned, Dr. Aram was also subjected to the Law of Anicca or Impermanence and only the contribution he made to his family, to his people in the village as well as to the country and to human civilization remains today. As a Buddhist may I wish for him the supreme bliss of Nibbana, the state of deathlessness.

In every respect, in education, in wisdom, in self-discipline, in composure and even in age he was my senior. Yet, whenever we

were together at so many international gatherings, in this country or in my country, he spared no words to give me the fullest compliments and appreciation for the humble work I was doing. This is the characteristic of a great man who, in spite of his great achievements in the fields of education, peace, development and inter religious harmony was always following the path of egolessness and a life of humility. I believe it was this inner purity and spiritual maturity of Dr. Aram that contributed to such.

A peaceful end to his worldly life in the presence of his wife, daughter and friends, having uttered the last words of advice in his serene and peaceful environment of Shanthi Ashram.

He was once our Chief Guest at one of the general meetings of Sarvodaya Movement of Sri Lanka in 1994. He spoke at length on the need to build a decentralized policy as Mahathma Gandhi visualized. He also mentioned that after many years of faltering hesitation India was finally taking this momentous step. He outlined the 73rd constitutional amendment on Panchayat Raj of the Indian Constitution and explained the 29 subjects that were earmarked for Panchayat Raj. This was the time when Sarvodaya in Sri Lanka was launching its Gram Swaraj Movement with its 10,000 villages development programme. His words inspired us to have faith to bring about a resurgence of participatory democracy.

His thinking has influenced us greatly in conceiving of Gram Swaraj in our context primarily because his thinking was about mankind a whole. He did not belong to a particular country or religion or some narrowly conceived group. His thinking helped us in Sri Lanka as it has helped other peoples elsewhere. He had faith in the common people and their ability to take decisions on matters which affect them. The people need to be organized and while we do not have a Panchayat system in Sri Lanka, we are organizing people into societies which are registered under our laws and give them certain legal rights such as opening bank accounts, undertaking contracts. Our major effort and contribution is to educate the people to acquire those knowledge, skills and competencies needed to progress on their chosen development path. I wish I had the opportunity to discuss with Dr. Aram about the next phase of our work. We now have several thousand villages who are well able to think and act for themselves. About a

hundred of them now operate their own banks and the kind of idea which Mahatma Gandhi had where peoples' savings circulate within the community itself and a type of self-sufficient economy appears to be feasible. We are now grappling with the possibilities of getting these villages to act together so that they become a force in the economy not in the narrow sense that economics is currently understood, but in the broader and deeper meaning which thinkers of the calibre of Dr. Aram gave to economics.

When he was appointed a Member of the Rajya Sabha, in his maiden speech itself, he beautifully played the role of educator by dealing with education, land and rural development. As a lecturer and professor in universities, Vice Chancellor of the Gandhi Gram (Deemed) University and as a member of so many commissions in India as well as abroad his contribution to education equals that of any other educationist I know of.

The statement he made later in Parliament on South Africa and North East India was another flow of scholarship and wisdom. At the Social Summit of United Nations when the Human Development Report was released he was one of those international figures who made a major contribution. He always tried to match his words with grass roots action as demonstrated in his participation in implementation of the M.P.'s local area development scheme in Coimbatore District. Dr. Aram's contribution to the World Conference on Religion and Peace is memorable. He did not miss a single meeting. Rev. Nikkyo Niwano, the Founder of the WCRP Movement had a great affection for Dr. Aram. When he received the 12th Niwano Peace Prize in 1995 it was such a joy to all of us who were making lesser contributions to the World Conference on Religion and Peace. I am happy that at this commemoration meeting, both the President and Secretary General of the WCRP and others are present here to pay tribute to this great personality.

Dr. Aram was inspired by Albert Einstein the scientist. He as well as Mrs. Minoti Aram were guided and encouraged by no lesser a person than Shri Jayaprakash Narayan, one of the greatest and noblest leaders of modern India. Dr. Aram personally undertook the peace making role in Nagaland. It was with great joy he used to relate his experiences in this epoch making peace

process. We have spent many hours whenever we met to explore as to how a similar formula can be developed to bring about a solution to the Sri Lankan conflict which has deteriorated into a civil war. In fact the last time we met in Vienna, he gave me in his own handwriting, a gist of the discussion we had on a possible reconciliatory approach. A man committed to total inner and outer peace, in November 1994 at the 6th World Assembly of WCRP he was there with Mrs. Minoti Aram, daughter Vinu and other members of the Shanthi Ashram. In this historic conference which was attended by His Holiness Pope John Paul II, Dr. Aram expressed great hope for the future. In fact he was delighted that Dr. Vinu Aram became the International Youth Coordinator of the WCRP and about Mrs. Minoti Aram's new book, St. Francis of Assissi and Mahathma Gandhi. In a letter Dr. Aram wrote to me in the latter half of 1994 he said: "The holding of free and democratic elections in South Africa in May 1994 was a "Dream come true". I was part of the International Ecumenical Observers' Mission headed by Dr. Kenneth Kaunda. This mission was sponsored by the World Council of Churches and South African Council of Religious Leaders. We moved from village to village and witnessed "history in the making". Archbishop Desmond Tutu told us about the "high expectations" of the common people."

Before 1995 dawned he was preparing himself for 1995 which for him and most of us was a historic year. The 5th anniversary of the United Nations, 50th anniversary of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, 125th birth anniversary of Mahathma Gandhi and 25th anniversary of WCRP all fell in 1995. He always referred to 1995 as the year of tolerance declared by the UN. It was also in this year that the UNESCO Seminar in Barcelona culminated in a Global Declaration on Non-violence and Peace with Justice. He not only got himself involved in every possible activity during this year but got people like me also to contribute as much as we could in our country and in India as well as internationally. I remember to have read somewhere that once Napoleon remarked, "At my command 1000s of soldiers stand to attention; but to get my wife and daughters to the dining table no amount of commands would succeed." One may be a great leader, but if he or she cannot take whole heartedly his family members in the mission for which he (or she) is dedicated, after his demise, what he stood for fades away. A really successful leader would not have this weakness.

Perhaps Dr. Aram is an accomplished leader whose work will not weaken after his demise. Like his shadow Mrs. Aram and then, Vinu their daughter followed his footsteps. They shared his philosophy of well-being of all, Sarvodaya. Like him their true inspiration is spiritual enlightenment. Their way of life is simple and their objectives are the loftiest possible. Shanthi Ashram and its many faceted activities including women, children, peace and development, international understanding and harmony are as strong as ever before. In other words Dr. Aram's eternal spirit is here in this Ashram with his family and colleagues. Internationally also, the white clad serene figure with well combed silvery hair with a large heart and a penetrating mind will always remain in spirit with his colleagues like those of us present here today.

Address by Dr. A.T. Ariyaratne, President Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement of Sri Lanka, at Shanthi Ashram, Coimbatore, India on 14th June 1998.

A FREE RENDERING OF THE SPEECH MADE BY DR. A.T. ARIYARATNE ON THE OCCASION OF LAUNCHING OF INDEPENDENCE GOLDEN JUBILEE PUBLICATION

FIFTY YEARS OF SRI LANKA'S INDEPENDENCE - A SOCIO-ECONOMIC REVIEW

Professor Indraratne, Prof. Kamal Karunanayake, Dr. Chandima de Mel, Scholars who have contributed to this Volume, Mr. Cyril Ekanayake the Chairman of Sarvodaya Vishva Lekha, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am here to pay my tribute to Prof. A D. V. de S. Indraratne for the almost impossible task he has accomplished in bringing about this 600 page volume "50 Years of Sri Lanka's Independence - A Socio-Economic Review."

In the first instance it is not easy to gather together such a galaxy of eminent scholars. It is even more difficult to get them to write essays of such high quality in a short given period of time. It is still harder to find a publisher who would accomplish the printing so quickly but elegantly. The biggest challenge of all is to find the necessary funds for an academic and scholarly task of this magnitude. It is only a man of highest intellectual capacity and scholarly eminence gifted with an indefatigable drive to get a job done who could have achieved this task. In my opinion no one other than Professor Indraratne could have accomplished such a remarkable feat. We salute him and the Sri Lanka Institute of Social and Economic Studies, of which he is the Chairman, for this historic achievement.

During the last two weeks I was travelling between London and Colombo, then India and Colombo and finally between Japan and Colombo and returned home at 3 O' clock this morning. Today Prof. Indraratne telephoned me twice and at 2.30 in the afternoon he said I may have to speak at the launching of this book and wanted me to at least glance through the abstracts

at the beginning of each chapter. I got down a copy of the book and on my way here had a cursory glance through its pages.

My initial reaction was as a Sri Lankan. I felt proud that in my country a scholar of the highest intellectual capacity and academic eminence such as the professor is still amongst us. It makes me feel sad that our country is not making the fullest use of that rich national treasure.

I also felt proud of the 28 scholars, who responded to Prof. Indraratne's call to action. I salute you and say that we respect you and are proud of you.

I fail in my duty if I don't mention Mr. Susiri de Silva, the Managing Director of Sarvodaya Vishva Lekha, who due to a sudden illness is not here today. We thank him and his dedicated staff for their contribution. They deserve our admiration for a flawless printing job of the highest quality which they have done in such a short time-producing six hundred pages of academic writing in a beautiful presentation.

Normally, the left side of my brain does not function properly to begin with. This is the half of the brain that is said to be the storehouse of intellectual, academic and analytical knowledge. Unfortunately, I am not blessed with that piece of equipment, as I am neither a scholar nor an academic. To compensate for this I use the right side of my brain, which is generally that half of the brain that is said to bring out the intuitive guidance we need for our life's chosen work. Today, even that half of my brain does not seem to function properly due to travel fatigue. However, it is my duty to make some remarks on this occasion for your patient and serious consideration since the expected Chief Guest has not been able to appear today.

No country can progress without a common vision shared by both her citizens and her leaders. Some of us dream about the kind of society we want to live in. I am such a dreamer who tries to be guided by a vision of a peaceful country with contented and happy people. However, visions and visionaries alone cannot achieve anything without knowledge. A country needs people with the highest mastery of knowledge, scholars, who

continuously pursue new vistas of knowledge. You 28 who have contributed to this publication and others like you throughout Sri Lanka are necessary for our country to find the directions to steer our course towards progress. You are the bright lights that dispel the darkness of ignorance from the minds of people.

Motivated by a vision and strengthened by knowledge, policy makers and planners should work like missionaries to uplift the conditions of our people. Those who work in the fields of politics and administration will find their work to be meaningless and it will bring no benefit to the people if they ignore the visionaries and the scholars.

In order to have their ideas heard, scholars must communicate their knowledge through print and the electronic media. Only this way will the planners, policy makers and ultimately the people be able to discover new thoughts and ideas. To do this requires funding. Typically academicians do not have such resources. Among those who do are the private sector corporations who have control over large financial resources. Those who make the best use of these monies are certain coteries of politicians. When I was in England, I read in the media how both major parties have received monies from questionable sources and how they were getting ready to return those monies when there was public opinion against such money laundering. This is sad and very unfortunate, but that is the truth. Whether we like it or not, in most countries corporations can make and unmake governments.

In Japan the papers told of how certain politicians, bureaucrats, and even so called social workers had been caught in corrupt practices. Some have resigned from their public offices, some have been jailed and one has committed suicide. What satisfaction has that produced for those involved in such goings-on?

Without resorting to unethical and corrupt practices for the sake of amassing wealth and power, enlightened persons and corporate institutions can use their power and capabilities to create wealth for the good of the people as a whole in their countries and the world. Such radical behavior would not only make social sense-but it would build stronger markets for their

own long term self interest.

Here today we have an excellent example of several companies exercising responsible corporate citizenship. The National Development Bank, Development Finance Corporation of Sri Lanka, Central Finance Company, the Bank of Ceylon, the Hatton National Bank and Seylan Bank of Ceylon have assisted Professor Indraratne, along with important scholars of our nation, to communicate with the decision makers and common people. This book will help to create a shared vision of where we have been and where we can go. This is a national service of the highest order, I congratulate these companies and hope that other corporations will be inspired to follow their good example.

On behalf of all of us I also like to thank the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) for assisting the Sri Lanka Institute of Social and Economic Studies in this endeavour.

The articles contributed in this 600 page volume are of a very high quality. Serious students of economics, governance, administration, environment, education, health, demography, and other disciplines can use this work as a reference book on our achievements and failures since 'independence'. For researchers, both domestic and foreign, this is a very comprehensive resource book. Although initially published in English, I believe Sinhala and Tamil translations will soon be available to the interested reader.

I do not think that the word "independence" is a precisely scientific term. It is more a political term used at the convenience of those who might accrue benefit by giving a false, egoistic sense of pride to people who in reality do not enjoy freedom at all. I feel that "interdependence" is a more scientific therm. After all, we belong to a culture in which during the first century A.D. an academic theses under the heading "Path to Freedom - Vimukti Marga" was written by an Arahant by the name Upatissa. A surviving Chinese translation of this ancient book has recently been translated into English and Sinhala. We are a people who understood freedom in the sense of breaking down both the inner shackles of greed, hatred and ignorance and outer forms of social,

political and economic oppression, we have to go very deep into these concepts of total freedom if we are truly to be a liberated people.

Dependent Co-origination, or Patticca-Sammuppada, is a principle to which we have to give very serious consideration at this time in the history of our country. Dependent Co-arising is a very scientific term. It teaches us about the interdependence between all living beings and nature itself. Our problems are multicausal. Solutions, therefore, have to be interrelated. Economic based thinking by itself cannot solve our problems. The kind of traditional economics we have adopted has resulted in selfishness, competition, and rivalry. Can't we think of an alternate pattern of economics where cooperation instead of competition can be promoted? Can't we think of building and nurturing sustainable communities to satisfy their needs and aspirations without endangering the chances of future generations to survive and live a life of contentment? These kinds of questions present a challenge for our visionaries and scholars to ponder and act upon if we are to reverse the negative trends we see in our society as we approach the 21st century.

With refreshing candor, Dr. Indraratne has correctly pointed our that we have fallen short of many of our national goals. For one example we have not provided all of the employment opportunities that we set out to achieve. Perhaps it would be wise to reevaluate such a goal. Can we shift our thinking to a different paradigm, wherein full engagement or right livelihood would hold equal status with a job? Can we create a social and economic environment in which from womb to old age a man or woman is fully engaged in contributing to society in alternate ways?

In the past, our slavish mentalities have not allowed official development - administration machinery to be geared to this kind of creative and novel thinking. However, this does not prevent us as citizens of this country from exploring alternate forms on our own. What we are doing in Sarvodaya, in over 13000 Sri Lanka villages is something of this type of experiment. Without publicity and fanfare we try to awaken people to their traditional memories of Right Livelihood as shown by the Buddha's teachings. Right Livelihood is an integral part of the Noble

Eightfold Path. Similarly we can draw inspiration and guidance from other religious faiths, to build cooperative, sustainable communities where both economics and the environment can work harmoniously.

Today, economics and environment are on a collusion path. Modern industry transforms natural resources into products that are used by consumers and eventually become undisposable waste. Can we learn better resource management from the eco-systems where such waste does not take place? Plants, animals and micro-organisms are so inter-dependent that waste products from one become food for another. They interact in a cyclical manner that is eternally sustainable. Can our scholars and visionaries learn lessons from the conduct of these natural cycles and apply them to our human society?

The earth is said to have been created 4.5 billion years ago. Scientists also tell us that life started evolving 3.5 billion years ago with the advent of bacterial cells. Our human specie is thought to have started its journey only 4 million years ago. remember that a California based Scientist, David Browner showed us how late we humans arrived on this planet. "If according to the Bible", he said, "creation took six days, man came into the scene during the last eleven seconds of the sixth day at midnight". He went on to point out that while we in Africa and Asia came to be at that moment, the Europeans arrived at only five seconds before midnight.

Written human history begins around 2/3 of a second before midnight. So as very recent arrivals on this planet, we must learn to respect the eco-systems that are so much our senior What they clearly teach us is that interdependence, cooperation, and co-evolution are the characteristics that have worked for their survival. Some call the lessons learned in this way "eco-literacy".

In 1991 we witnessed the war in Persian Gulf which resulted in destruction of thousands of human lives and tragic environmental disasters. Perhaps within the next couple of weeks another disaster of a similar nature could befall the same region. Although it is unthinkable, some people believe that the possibility exists that this action may trigger a catastrophic third

world war.

If we look deeply into the root of this dispute it boils down to simply a question of economics manifested by competition for scarce energy sources. Do all the creatures on earth need to face possible extinction for such a reason? We must quickly develop the knowledge that co-existence in peace is possible. We must reorder our priorities. We have to find a deeper understanding of the interrelationship of human life, society, and environment so we can prevent these catastrophes from occurring over and over again until we are extinct from this planet, taking all else with us. We can and we must awaken to a new reality.

It is not necessary to be pessimistic about our future. The solutions we need are at hand now. We need only the will to reorder our priorities and apply them. We have to think of such technology as alternative energy which is found in many forms such as sunlight, wind power, hydro power, co-generation, and bio mass. Development of these sources of energy would be a positive contribution to peace.

Diversity and creativity have been the biggest contributors to our revolution. Today, we do not honor the importance of diversity. We often are not as engaged in the process of creation as we are in mutual destruction. We try to solve problems by competition, deception, and violence rather than through the more rational and beneficial means of understanding and mutual cooperation.

Cooperate and government bureaucrats treat our common birthrights such as air, water, and soil as their own exclusive commodities. This short term thinking is a terrible mistake. Such processes not only pollute the environment and bring ecological disasters, they also lead to the breakdown of our traditional social relationships. Accurate information is distorted and withheld from the public, who ultimately have to pay the environmental and social costs. Governments cling to measurements like the GDP and Growth Rates which tell economic half truths and ignore the critical long term eco-system questions altogether.

Sri Lanka's progressive scholars and forward thinking

economists, such as those of you who contributed to this work, must try to advocate ecological tax reforms or eco-taxes. Revenue based income taxes could be progressively but completely done away with. So, we have to create eco-tax systems and eco-audit systems and so on while we practice and advocate simple and right livelihoods for our people. Greed produces short-term results while creating long-term social and environmental havoc. Wealth and acquisition of power for only a few are self defeating activities. One night, I was with a dear friend, late Mr. B.J. Fernando, the eminent lawyer who had started upon a spiritual life. A mutual friend joined us. He was extremely rich. I pleaded with him that he should stop devoting time to making more money now and concentrate on helping people. I told him how millions of people in our country are in need and how people like him could help them without losing anything. He laughed and shouted at me. He said "Ari, I am going to make money, more money, until I die - I love it." I felt very sad about him as he was a very pleasant and humble gentleman, but that was his choice. I was sadder still, when the following day morning Mr. Fernando called me and gave me the shocking news that our friend had died of a heart attack in the early hours of the morning, a few hours after we met him. That is how life works.

Our lives are impermanent. The short period we live is precious. So it is my plea that without fear, or without unnecessarily worrying over the security problems we all are talking about, lets get to work.

Let us create the light of a shared vision together, equip ourselves with the torch of knowledge; and go out to serve our people and build a society where we can cooperate and live without the fear and violence that affects our country today.

(This speech was made by Dr. A.T. Ariyaratne at SLFI on 10th February 1998)

PEOPLE CENTERED POVERTY ERADICATION

I thank the organizers of this seminar for asking me to make a 15-minute presentation on the subject of People Centered Poverty Eradication related to the area three of the Poverty Priorities document from the 1997 Human Development Report. This indeed is a very difficult task for me. UNDP report primarily addresses the policy makers, the governments and development administrators and expects them to implement the solutions offered by the UNDP. It does not address tens of thousands of self-organized poor, communities, such as the ones I represent, who are also attempting to eradicate their poverty situation through their own organized efforts. In spite of some new words such as 'pro-poor growth' this report does not provide an agenda or any advice for the poor as to how they can set about to eradicate their poverty.

During the last 40 years I have participated in a large number of such seminars sponsored by UNDP and other similar macro institutions both governmental and non-governmental, but as a grass roots worker I cannot say that their approach has gone any where closer to solving people's problems. Postponing the solutions by ten-year periods like the now forgotten UN development decades will not take the poor anywhere. Without the participation of the people who are affected by poverty and related problems no solutions can be found. Therefore, my total attention for the last several years has been almost totally focussed on finding with them ways and means of empowering the affected people within their own habitat or ecological-region and in the context of their own cultural and religious traditions. So, what I am going to speak at this seminar is purely from that experience which not at all is based on a pre-conceived theoretical framework but based on practical experience in over 12,000 communities within my country, Sri Lanka and outside where Sarvodaya is active.

In the first place the concept of "poverty" as used by these macro organizations and national leaders and politicians is a very

limited way of looking at the lives of people. In our concept of a good life, even those in the so-called developed world are "poor" in many respects. We do not see the problem as one where one set of people who are "rich" are trying to do something for the others who are "poor". We see the problem as one of the "development of All". The present criteria used to distinguish between the "poor" and the "not poor" are based either on income levels or food consumption (minimum calorie intake). With the conversion of practically everything under the sun to money terms there is no doubt that income is a significant indicator of the quality of life a person may lead. Likewise food is an essential requisite. But life is not simply what money can buy and food, while essential, is not all that there is to life. Our national and international planners when they use these criteria and submit plans to eradicate poverty as they conceive it are only planning for a dismal and limited future for the vast majority of people on Earth. They are essentially saying, "You fellows are very badly off. You have no drive. You make no effort to improve yourselves. You are waiting for handouts. You have not acquired any skills. You cannot all live like us. But we will make your life a little bit better." There is also a lot which is unsaid. E.g. "We are now very worried whether we can continue to live as we do without making your life a little bit better."

We at Sarvodaya do not believe in one kind of life for the rich and another kind of life for the poor. We believe in a world where there is neither "poverty" nor "affluence". The problems of definition arise largely for those who are far removed from where the real action is. To our workers at village level there is no difficulty of recognizing the "poor" and the "affluent". We find both in the communities in which we work. Our development activities include both. We believe that the "poor" are rich in some respects and the "affluent" are poor in some other respects. That is why our development programmes include both. We do not believe that "poverty" can be eradicated in isolation.

This is an important consideration and I would like to expand on it. In the first place "food" is not all there is to life. In our work with the people in the villages they have identified what their basic needs were. It certainly includes food, housing, health, water, clothing, energy and communication facilities. But

more than four decades ago, we realized that their number one priority was the "environment". If at all people live close to and with the environment they are the so-called "poor". Contrary to popular belief they like to take care of it. Among the other basic needs they identified were education and spiritual and cultural needs. We believe very firmly that resources should be utilized to meet these expressed basic needs of people. It is not sufficient to simply meet their food requirement or their housing requirements or their health requirements, etc. in isolation. Most poverty eradication programmes of the state and international organizations are characterized by their narrow sectoral approach. Far from co-ordination and integration of such efforts, it is not unknown for the to work at cross purposes and indeed even "fight with each other". The "poor" by whatever definition need a total package.

The basis of such a total package is not charity for the poor. An essential foundation for such a package is enormous respect for the poor. They may be illiterate. They may dress poorly. But it is a gross mistake to think that they are not educated. They may not be educated in the narrow conventional sense. But they have a wisdom acquired through living in their environment. They have a good idea of what they want. They have their own well articulated priorities which of course may not match those of national planners. We believe that the poor should decide what should be done to improve their quality of life. Intervention programmes should support such efforts. Intervention programmes should not impose on the poor what some remote group has in its wisdom decided what is best for them.

In our Sarvodaya approach we support the decisions of the community which includes the poor. It they want to do something we help them to get enlightened as to the resources which they already have. They are themselves a very considerable resource. We concentrate first on what they may do by themselves to improve their lot. They may need more labour to accomplish a chosen task such as improving road access in which case we talk with adjoining communities who may send volunteers to help them. They may lack some equipment in which case we supply them from one of our offices or we may borrow them from somewhere. They may lack skills in which case we

train them. In each case we support what they have decided upon.

Some may have doubts as to whether appropriate decisions will be taken. It is here that cultural, moral and spiritual considerations apply. While many inroads have been made into the psyche of our peoples we find that they are still conscious of their traditional values. It has only to be awakened and supported. That is what we in Sarvodaya are dedicated to do. People accept very willingly that development is essentially of themselves. A person is developed to the extent that he/she extends loving kindness to all life, translates that feeling into action, does so selflessly and in altruistic joy and meets success and failure with equanimity. A group of people is developed to the extent that they share their resources, engage in pleasant discourse, engage in constructive action and treat each other as essentially equals though there are obvious differences.

Decisions made by the people are directed by a philosophy of development. This philosophy is not something that we have created. It is a part of the traditional cultural, moral and spiritual values which have permeated our lives for centuries. It may be said that such a philosophy may be practiced only in Sri Lanka. This is not true. We have communities in Bangladesh, India, and Nepal which are making an effort to improve their conditions on these lines. The principles of individual and group awakening I briefly referred to above are in fact universal in both in time and space. In Sri Lanka itself we work among all ethnic and religious groups among whom are Hindus, Christians and Muslims.

I referred earlier to the need for a total package for the poor. So far I have briefly referred to only one aspect of such an approach, namely, a comprehensive concept of development which includes not only social, political and economic dimensions but also cultural, moral and spiritual dimensions. There is also another aspect from which a total package for the empowerment of the poor has to be viewed. I referred to this earlier. It is the conviction that the "affluent" too need to participate in development programmes.

It is not possible to empower the poor without simultaneously "de-empowering" the affluent. The poor are subject to social,

economic and political forces over which they now have very little control. It is the "affluent" in all manners of diverse ways who rule the world. A poor man may, in future not even produce the rice which generations before him have produced because some international corporation has acquired a patent for it. If this trend is allowed to continue the poor will no longer be able to use even their traditional medicinal herbs grown in their back garden to cure their common illnesses.

Resources are not used to produce the basic needs of people. On the contrary much of it is used to meet the "demands" of those who have the "purchasing power". It is the unmitigated consumer needs of the affluent which determine the "supply". Modern technologies are used to create artificial "needs".

It is essential that the "affluent" be educated to accept the need for a life style which is capable of being sustained. Most scholars are agreed that the present "globalisation" will make the poor even poorer. Who benefits from this "globalisation"? No body now seriously believes in the "trickling down". At best it is only a trickle.

We in Sarvodaya never believed in the trickle down processes which were and are advocated even today though using different terms. We trusted the people, their ability to recognize diversity in their social and natural environment, acceptance of interdependency and mutual co-operation, their capacity to self-organize within their environment to create sustainable life styles. With self-reliance and community participation, initially, they launch Basic Needs Satisfaction programmes. This has to be followed up with Secondary and Tertiary Needs satisfaction activities. For the latter an enabling political and economic back up from the higher echelons of policy making from local and central government institutions to United Nations and international financial institutions is necessary. This is exactly what is sadly lacking.

The coercive and violent structures that are imposed on the people which promote mono-cultural societies and uniformity go against all natural laws. They result in social disintegration, political turmoil and environmental destruction. They obstruct

growth of self-rule, decentralization and cultural diversity and undermines traditional intellectual richness. In short these unjust structures attempt to strangle the 'thinking capacity' of the poor and the powerless. Worse still is the damage it does to the controllers of these structures by leaving them complacent with self-righteousness and a false sense of security.

Under these realities people have three choices to select from: One - Accept the kind of development definitions provided to us by these institutions and conform to them, Two - Reject them and take a confrontational attitude and if necessary follow a violent revolutionary path; Three-Redefine development, create new strategies and structures and follow a nonviolent path to total revolutionary transformation of our societies. It is an attempt to create democratic participation and a just social order from bottom up. Sarvodaya has rejected the first two choices and has concentrated its efforts on the third way. In this attempt the teachings of the Buddha and experiences of great non-violent leaders such as Mahatma Gandhi and Acharya Vinoba Bhave have been of immense value for our work.

We look at development as an Awakening process of ALL-Sarvodaya. This awakening has to begin with oneself, with every individual and then extend to the family, the community, the nation and the world. This awakening should be an integrated whole where spiritual, moral, cultural, social, political and economic aspects of life are included. Accordingly programmes are designed and implemented.

A five-stage programme is implemented in villages. Villages. Villages themselves are categorized into pioneering, intermediate and peripheral villages. Each pioneering village guides 4 intermediary villages and five peripheral villages thus forming a cluster of ten villages. By the end of 1997 Sarvodaya was working in 1100 pioneering, 4400 intermediate and 5500 peripheral villages. All of them have as their common goal village self-government. To help these organizations in diverse ways there are national level specialized institutions such as the Early Childhood Development Institute, Rural Technical Services, Legal Services Movement, Women's Movement, Legal Services Movement, Sarvodaya Peace Brigade, Sarvodaya Economic

Enterprises Development Services and so on. Over 3000 villages coming under this scheme have built a strong savings and credit culture and several hundred of them have legally established their own Sarvodaya Village Development Banks staffed mostly by trained village women.

There isn't enough time for me to go into details of this Movement or its strategies for poverty eradication. All I can say in conclusion to governments and others is 'Please admit your failure to eradicate poverty. At least at this late hour give up your will to control the poor. Give them freedom and space to awaken to their potential. They will show you too the true path to sustainability, contentment and happiness.'

(Speech delivered by Dr. A. T. Ariyaratne at World Conference on Religion and Peace Tokyo Seminar on Religion, Development and Poverty Eradication - March 8-10, 1988)

DR. A.T. ARIYARATNE
ON
POLITICS, PEOPLE AND POWER

(Dr. A.T Ariyaratne, the Sarvodaya Leader, spoke to "DANA" in an exclusive interview, on some controversial matters that baffle the readers of the Sarvodaya concept in relation to politics, elections and peoples power)

Q What is your role as the leader of Sarvodaya and that of the movement in relation to politics of this country?

Dr. A.T.A: I have no particular role as the leader of the movement. It is the Movement that acts. We do not have leaders who lead. Historically, a few others and myself have been responsible for initiating the revolutionary process known as 'Sarvodaya'. But now, it is the Movement and the people involved in it that count. So they have to decide and take action here.

Q Does that mean that your Movement would take part in a general election in the choice of people's representatives?

Dr A. T. A: We have never taken part in party politics as a Movement. But individuals who belong to various political parties are with us and were with us. Some are now in the Government and some in the Opposition, both right and left. As a member of Sarvodaya, one cannot take part in active party politics. If one wants to do that, he leaves Sarvodaya and attends to his political activities.

Q. Party politics are not engaged in by you. Why?

Dr. A.T.A: Because the objectives of our Movement is to unite people; not to divide. We always look at people to pick up the best in each man. The evil, or the bad things we forget. Political parties strive to gain political power. Let them do it. That has to be done by them. We attempt to give back that political power to the people.

Q. You attempt to give back power to the people? What does this exactly mean?

Dr. A.T.A: Political power emanates from people. From the feudal times and even from primitive times, what we have been doing is to take away this from them. Even democracy which we have inherited at least to give something of it to the people, is not a perfect form to invest that political power in the people. It is the best of the worst forms available to us.

Q. How do you think that you can give this power back to the people?

Dr. A.T.A: First by making the people conscious that they are the real repositories of all political power. This power which we call 'Janashakti' emanates, not from the barrel of a **gun, but from the hearts of people.** They should be made conscious and thereafter educated in the use of their power.

Q. How could this be done?

Dr. A.T.A: By making them take their own decisions. Now, we, the officials or administrators or the elected representatives of the people decide for them. Why should we do this? Why can't the people decide for themselves?

Let us take a General election, for example. We forward our party candidate. Sarvodaya like the people to field their own candidates, from different parties. Instead of the party choosing the candidate, the people who constitute that particular party at the base, chooses the candidate.

Q. You do not rule over the Party Political System at least now?

Dr. A.T.A: We have to face reality. The Political Party System is there and we have to accept it. We are not against it. What we want is all these political parties to become People's Parties. That is instead of being controlled by an elite group of party men, let them be controlled by the people.

Q. You are against the division of the people?

Dr. A.T.A: Yes. the people may hold different political ideologies. They may fight the General Elections. They may select the party they want. But in the process they should not at any time use violence. The political party should play the game on fair rules to everyone. But after the elections, let the people without divisions, without fighting against each other, work together.

Q. Some say that you are also planning one day to fight the Elections?

Dr. A.T.A: That is not my philosophy or plan of action. If I desired political power, I Should have joined a political party 20 or 30 years ago. What I wanted is to motivate the people to help themselves. The people are the greatest treasure we have. I want to awaken them; beginning from the lowest, most exploited and the feeblest.

Q. You said that you are a revolutionary

Dr. A.T.A: Yes, I am. I believe in a non-violent revolution of all mankind. I want man to realize that other men are his brothers, regardless of race, religion, ideology or any other man-made difference. If all men realize this and act on that, then our revolution in revolutionarising man is complete.

Q. They criticise your movement as only a service organization or another welfare organization What is your reaction to this?

Dr. A.T.A: Sarvodaya as I have told you, is armed with a philosophy and a practical strategy to re-awaken man. Social care is one aspect that we are interested in. But our philosophy and strategy is to motivate human beings to help themselves. In the beginning we started our strategies in the most depressed, under-privileged villages. We worked with them and lived with them first. **You cannot talk of changing the rural economic or social structure only from a platform or from a seminar room in a foreign country. You have to go to the people, live with them**

and learn from them.

Q. What do you think of the present political situation?

Dr. A.T.A: I do not speculate. But as a practical man I have a great faith in the people; they are not fools. They know what they should do. I am certain the people will decide for themselves. But for Sarvodaya, we have far ahead plans, far ahead even than the General Elections. We are. as I have told you earlier, interested in making the people of this country, the real masters of political power. We will do everything possible to achieve this by non-violent revolutionary means. We are neither with the Government nor with anyone else. Anyone doing something good as an objective to help the people either from the left or right would receive our support. So there is no question of supporting one party, one Government or another.

Q. A much battered word is "Revolution" What do you think?

Dr. A.T.A: There is a basic difference between us an many others who speak of revolutionary people. We always share our experiences, knowledge and whatever we have with the people. We do not attempt to manoeuvre them from a long distance.

Q. There are some who say that other than a few social activities, your organization has contributed nothing to change the asset-structure such as the system of land tenure, class systems etc.

Dr. A.T.A: May I ask two questions. In the first place, are they aware of what we have done. In the second place, what have they themselves done? Let me answer these two questions. Our strategy always was to fight for the underprivileged; and the exploited. Although we don't proclaim results, the work we have done is enormous. Take for example, caste or class system. All our strategies are against the distinction of class or caste. When we moved to Kanatholuwa in 1958, the Rodiya people there were not allowed to wear clothes. It was our work in these villages that actually turned the tide against such inequalities.

The land-tenure pattern cannot be changed by us alone. By our legal-aid scheme, we are helping the rural farmers to stabilise the ownership of their land. By helping them to concentrate power in the hands of the community, we are breaking the monopoly of power at its base. Those who speak of class etc, are those who have never worked even for a few minutes with the people. They live capitalist lives and go to the village to talk of social change. These people, whether of the left or the right, are deceiving the people. To talk of what others have done.you must yourself do something worthwhile.

ROLE OF TRANSNATIONAL GRASSROOT PEOPLE'S MOVEMENTS IN PROMOTING THE IDEALS OF UNESCO IN THE TWENTY FIRST CENTURY

This is a very auspicious occasion. Looking back at the achievements and shortcomings in the past 50 years, assessing the needs at the present time and projecting a vision to the future of UNESCO Movement in general and UNESCO Non-governmental Movement of Japan in particular is certainly a very auspicious moment. As a friend and a collaborator of the National Federation of UNESCO Associations in Japan (NFUAJ) for a considerable period of time I consider it a privilege to be invited to this historic event. For this kindness I thank Mr. Satoru Murai, the Chairman of the Board of Directors, and his dedicated staff. We highly appreciate the co-operation extended by the Government of Japan, specially by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to make this event a success. The presence of Prof. Frederico Mayor, the Director-General of UNESCO, at this panel is a great inspiration and encouragement to all us.

We are failing in our duty if we do not remember with gratitude, the foresight and accomplishments of, the pioneers of the UNESCO NGO Movement in Japan. They had the foresight to start this movement in 1947 even before Japan was admitted to be a member -state of UNESCO in 1951, and as a member of the United Nations in 1956. It was their voluntary spirit and effort that accomplished the difficult task of taking the post world war Japan back into the world community as a champion for world peace through the educational, scientific and cultural advent of a peoples of the world. Once Japan was reconstructed and reached unparalleled economic prosperity the drive to uphold the UNESCO's mission for world peace did not slacken. On the contrary the second generation of those who took over the leadership of the UNESCO-NGO movement in Japan intensified and diversified its role extending it not only into all regions and eminent personalities of Japan but also to so many other countries as well specially in Asia. They can take pride of the fact that the

Japanese Government is the largest contributor in the world to the UNESCO budget.

However, another dimension to international co-operation is the contributions made by people through their UNESCO Associations in Japan numbering over270 to poorer people's organisations around the world who shared their vision. People to people cooperation has a human dimension which bring forth higher qualities in man such as concern for others. commitment to serve, personal sacrifice and working selflessly for altruistic joy.

Sarvodaya Women's Movement (SWM) in Sri Lanka has established a Learning Centre with the help of NFUAJ where several hundred disadvantaged women are helped to discover a new vision. learn new skills and face life with greater self-confidence. The World Terakoya Movement has been a source of imspiration and strength to the Sarvodaya Women's Movement. The Learning Centres of the Sarvodaya Women's Movement are designed to make a greater contribution toward a broad recommitment to the goal of education for all and to seek social mobility through education. SWM believes that the concept of Terakoya "caring and sharing " and the vision of Sarvodaya "Awakening of All" would trigger their multisectoral development activities bringing about the conscientization of the people. When they learnt that I would be visiting Japan to participate in the celebrations they requested me to express their great appreciation to WTM for its contribution and to convey their felicitations to their brothers and sisters in the WTM. I am sure similar sentiments are expressed by other fraternal groups in Asia towards their Japanese partners on this historic occasion.

We have great expectations of Japan, with her comparatively stronger economic foundation , in reshaping the Asian people's future in the 21st century. If Asia with 60% of the world's population, can rediscover the essence of her spiritual and cultural heritage, protect and enrich its natural environment and provide the most needed security in basic human needs for all her peoples, that I believe, is the surest way Asia can contribute for Peace in the world.

In his position paper for this Symposium Mr. Satoru Murai, the

Chairman, has raised several very serious issues for our consideration and comment. These are issues which have a bearing and relevance not only to the Japanese but also to whole of Asia and the world. I have no doubt that UNESCO is the most effective UN body and the correct forum to take up these issues globally. At the same time it must be emphasised that the discussions and resulting action plans should not be confined only to governmental and intergovernmental fora and programmes at national, regional and global levels but they must be done more at the level of the people at the 'grassroots' with their fullest participation. The most critical contribution for peace, development and human survival will be made in the coming millennium by people themselves. From being passive recepients and onlookers in the past they are now in a position to take the centre of the stage.

In the future, governments and intergovernmental bodies will have to play a co-ordinating and supporting role to people's efforts rather than performing a controlling and regulatory role which they played in the past falling short of the degree of success that was expected. Most systems of governance are suffering from political polarisations and resulting rivalries. This situation is aggravated by religious and ethnic differences when they are exploited for power-political ends by self-seeking factions. Some of these systems degenerate and give rise to widespread corruption and violent confrontations and civil wars.

On the other hand on both sides of the divide in situations where violent confrontations take place there are people who are sane and humane and who can rise above man-made differences to work for higher ideals that will bring about the weal and well-being of all. They are the ones who can ' build peace in the minds of men 'in the spirit of the UNESCO constitution. Our task should be to help them to get motivated, organised, educated and trained to develop their own strategies to confront their share of challenges -be it in the sector of poverty, pollution, environment, human rights and responsibilities, indiscipline in educational institutions, crimes, terrorism or war. In other words a highly decentralised approach with maximum devolution of decision-making power is necessary. It is in this context that the role of voluntary, people-based, community organisations which are also

known as non-governmental organisations has become necessary at this time to promote the ideals of UNESCO.

The World Terakoya Movement of Japan works with such organisations. They bring together grassroot organisations transcending national boundaries. The word grassroot is sometimes misleading in the sense that some think they are people who are ignorant, cut away from the modern world, incapable of doing things by themselves and so on. This is a misconception. These are people who have had a rich educational system, their own appropriate sciences, traditional technologies and rich cultures. For a variety of historical reasons including long periods of subjugation to colonial powers these people have been neglected and were bypassed by modern competitive societies with their profit motivated economies and power-orientated political systems. They have been the victims of social, political and economic exploitation by dominant violent societies. They do not make wars but they with their women and children suffer most by war. In spite of undergoing sufferings and injustices these peoples have retained and protected certain value systems, safeguarded family life and community spirit, and kept more sustaining relationships with the environment and the natural world. They are the surest guaranters for a future world where human life and values will be respected, nature will be nurtured while being wisely utilized and right kind of human-relationships will be promoted.

Looking at the frassroot concept from another perspective I venture to state that we should include in this category all those people whose feet are firmly on the ground and whose minds and hearts are attuned to coexist in peace with the rest of humanity and the living world. These are people who treat one another with mutual respect and concern. They may live in the affluent North or non-affluent South. It is a kind of universal spiritual affinity that brings together people in a certain geographical vicinity in a particular country with those in another country. By utilizing our organisational skills and the modern communication tools these groups of people in different countries will have to be linked together to avert the global disasters we face today and work towards building our common global future. It is my sincere opinion that The World Terakoya Movement of the National

Federation of UNESCO Associations in Japan (NFUAJ) should be given this new dimension and expanded in the years that lie ahead of us.

Mahatma Gandhi dreamed of a post-independent India where self-governing village communities would play the major role of building a new civilization where Truth and Non-violence would be the guiding principles. Similarly for the last forty years we in the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement of Sri Lanka have been working to reawaken our village communities to build a new social order guided by the teachings and principles enunciated by Lord Buddha and Mahatma Gandhi. Sarvodaya Shramadana means the Awakening of All through voluntary Sharing.

According to Sarvodaya, development should be comprehensive, co-ordinated and result in a process of awakening the individual, the family and the community. Social, political and economic development should take place simultaneously with cultural, moral and spiritual development. Individuals awaken to the extent that they show respect for all life, translate such feelings into action, gain dispassionate joy from engaging in such actions and are not discouraged by failure nor proud of success. Families, groups and communities awaken to the extent that they voluntarily share all their resources inclusive of their knowledge and skills, engage in pleasant interactions, perform constructive activities and practice equality in association.

Sarvodaya works in 11600 villages in Sri Lanka out of an estimated total of 24,000 villages. In keeping with its philosophy the movement helps these communities to empower themselves to become self-governing communities to the maximum possible extent. With this objective in mind three core programmes, namely, Social Empowerment, Technological Empowerment and Economic Empowerment programmes are promoted in these villages.

From the very initial stage, it is the communities which make the decisions. The National Sarvodaya Movement with its network of district (numbering 35) and divisional (numbering over 245) centres and specialised development education institutes assists in the implementation of these decisions through the

training of village personnel, developing and strengthening the village- level organisations which can speak for the village and become recognised legal entities, encouraging co-operative activities between villages, providing technical advice and services particularly with regard to water supply and sanitation, developing village level-savings leading to the establishment of village development banks, training of village personnel specially women to run them, providing extension services to those who borrow from the village credit schemes, promoting the use of solar energy, organic fertiliser and farming without pesticides, strengthening traditional cultural and religious practices which promote harmonious living between groups of people and linking these communities with similar groups in other countries and bringing about exchange of leaders etc. In all these it is the community which determines its own programmes and progress.

There should be a clear -cut agenda for these communities to engage themselves in continuous self-development activities. Over three decades ago Sarvodaya formulated a Ten Basic Needs Satisfaction Programme to reflect the expressed thinking of the people it worked with. They are needs pertaining to Environment, Water, Clothing, Food, Housing, Health, Energy, Communication, Education and Spirituo-Cultural needs of the people. They implement this self-development agenda by working on satisfying these basic needs with their self-reliance, community participation and sharing of their physical efforts, resources and traditional know-how. The national Sarvodaya network contribute to their efforts in ways already mentioned above.

There are other needs such as schools, hospitals, post-offices, roads, transport facilities, irrigational activities and markets which are collectively required for many communities and which may be termed Secondary Needs. There are still other needs at a national level such as highways, railways, air-transportation, police, national security, higher education, foreign relations and so on which may be termed Tertiary Needs. In this needs agenda Sarvodaya does not include employment as a basic need. Emphasis is on Full Engagement or Right Livelihood towards which every man, woman and child is facilitated. In the process of intelligently gearing all their efforts to satisfy their needs people acquire skills, their innate talents are surfaced, dignity of

labour is developed, work ethics are inculcated and development becomes their own business not something imposed on them by distant bureaucrats, planners and politicians. Total Education, Scientific Knowledge and Technical know-how as well as the right kind of cultural milieu are necessary to make this people's approach bear maximum benefits for themselves and the country as a whole. It is in these sectors the governments, inter-governmental bodies such as the UNECSO, private sector organisations, national and international voluntary bodies, philanthropic and scientific institutions, funding organisations etc have to intervene not as masters but facilitators. In a process of this nature employment creation becomes a natural consequence from a dynamism created from grassroots up and not a calculated effort subject to anachronistic economic laws of supply and demand, foreign investments, growth, gross domestic product, open markets and globalisation. The best in all of these will be applicable as long as people are at the centre of their own development and they are the first beneficiaries.

The Sarvodaya approach, based on a faith in the essential goodness of people and the belief that the 'good' will prevail over the 'bad' given a suitable environment and encouragement tries to address the immediate collective needs of the people as identified and determined by them. Whatever their urgent need, be it a road, or a well for drinking water, a child-care centre for their children, it is attended to largely with their own resources. The Sarvodaya central input is primarily educational. Of the development activities which take place in a village community around 80% are based on their own resources. There is no activity which takes place in a village community which is funded completely from outside. The community makes a contribution however small.

Respect for all life implying a concern for other human beings, animals and plant kingdom is at the heart of the Sarvodaya work.Constructive action looks down upon such economic activities such as manufacture of bombs, armaments and other destructive weapons. Economic activities should meet the basic needs of people and not the wants of an ego-centric few. Sarvodaya works towards increasing the demand for basic goods and services particularly of the rural and urban poor by increasing their own savings and making it circulate within their own

community. It promotes the production of their own food and educates farmers about not getting caught in the 'globalisation' where they produce for an export market to earn money to buy items of low quality food imported into the country. It assists farmers to store their harvest with least post-harvest losses for a better day and provides the needed storage technology and market information.

These activities take place in the existing socio-economic and political configurations which are in fact inimical to such activities. Sarvodaya believes that if a sufficient number of communities in Sri Lanka as well as in other countries implement such programmes, the existing world order may be changed to lead to a sustainable life on earth with human beings living harmoniously with other forms of life and managing their non-renewable resources with wisdom and responsibility towards future generations.

I cited the case of the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement of Sri Lanka as an example of a transnational grassroot people's movement promoting the ideals of UNESCO. Sarvodaya effort has been appreciated and assisted by many governments, intergovernmental bodies and international non-governmental organisations. The World Terakoya Movement sponsored by the NFUAJ is a partner organisation in Japan and there are several others in this country with whom we co-operate. We are sharing four decades of Sarvodaya experience with many other communities in other countries by a variety of educational, training and development co-operation programmes. It is both North-South and South South co-operation. There are many similar people's movements in the world all of which should be networked for the common good of humanity. Perhaps the World Terakoya Movement which has done so much in this direction can extend its mandate and play a significant role in that kind of networking. A beginning can be made in Asia.

With economic prosperity in most countries traditional value systems, family ties, community feelings and moral standards get degenerated. I believe Japan is no exception. Therefore, if more and more students and young people could be attracted to the UNESCO national associations by opening up new chapters,

under their own self-management, and linked to other community organisations in other cultures and countries, their perceptions and attitudes can be changed to undertake global responsibilities. They can work as volunteers for short and long periods in those situations where less economic prosperity is the order people's lives. At the same time they can learn the importance of spiritual, moral and cultural values in those communities. They can see, sense and feel the cultural heritages of those people's past civilizations and realize how proud they are of their past even now. This may inspire Japanese youth to rediscover their rural culture which is fast disappearing with less than 3% of the people engaged in agriculture and motivate them to strive to bring back that pride which every rural community in Japan also enjoy the past.

In the words of the Buddha which is reflected in the preamble of the UNESCO charter 'Mind is the forerunner of all good and evil states. Mind is supreme and Mind made are they. If we can speak and act with a pure mind happiness will certainly follow. Today let us all resolve to serve with renewed faith in this ideal and being a fresh march for peace even if takes another fifty years.

(Speech delivered at the Symposium on 'UNESCO'Contributions in the 21st Century' Commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the Founding of the Non-governmental UNESCO Movement in Japan - 29th-30th of November 1997 Venue: Nihon Seinenkan Hall, Tokyo.)

PROFILE OF LIBERTY : SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ASPECTS

Most of us whose countries were foreign rule were influenced by their way of thinking based on their pattern of life. Liberty as such was thus conceived in its outer trappings - not from the inner essentials it contains. The freedom which countries under colonial rule meant was getting way from the physical hold of foreign masters, and not freeing the country from the pattern of life imposed by them. The values, attitudes, perceptions etc. of those who kept us under their rule became a bigger burden than their physical presence to us when they eventually left us.

The social and cultural aspect of liberty were not important to most of us at the time of freeing ourselves from foreign rule. May be some individuals endowed with a deep vision such as the Mahatma, such dimensions were visible - but to all of us lesser souls, the most important thing was freedom from the physical hold of our country by a foreign power. The spiritual hold almost stifling our inner lives and social life was not only not visible but comparatively less important. Unfortunately it is this hold which later ate into our nations' spirit, making us 'more colonial' than when we were under foreign rulers.

The social problems in our societies increased because we were not able to understand what liberty precisely meant. Our nations' enlightenment automatically did not come to us once we gained our physical freedom. This was because with freedom we were not ready to look at the social dimension and make us realise that there is a basic duty in all of us to see that all members of our nation would have the minimum level of economic means necessary to lead a meaningful life. Here I do not mean that everyone should have an equal share of everything which, although a good ideal, is not practical. My idea is that to enjoy liberty leading to the realisation of a fruitful life, everyone should possess the basic requirements. You may say that clothing, food, shelter and access to health and medical care, education and recreation should be available to all of us. It is then that liberty

could lead to individual and social happiness which together denotes enlightenment.

The social aspect of liberty lies in securing information necessary to lead a meaningful life. Education is very important here. To make life happy, one should have information accessible to him. His knowledge would depend on this information. Today, communication technology has brought this information to us. But to make education meaningful; that is to make the information we receive productive and useful to each one of us, such information basically should enable us to adjust our relationship with ourselves, with others who live in society, with the environment, including flora and fauna. In the coming century, our liberty and enlightenment ensuring out of it depend mostly on this aspect of education which would motivate us to balance our inner and outer life. Education and information thus received would develop our innerselves, making us feel one with all other human beings, animals,birds, fish and nature.

Education for liberty would in the first place help to create deep human values in us. These values emphasise compassion, non-violence, sharing and getting rid of excessive greed which would comprise the fundamentals. Liberty in its socio-cultural dimension would be practically useless without such values which control and revive our behaviour pattern leading to individual and social organisation.

The purpose of education is to free the individual and society from its self-imposed as well as externally imposed bonds. In our own hearts if education could establish an approach making us less greedy and motivate us to share our resources, cultivate compassion and non-violence, individual discipline would be basically established. It is this individual discipline that would fashion social discipline. We transfer our individual values and attention to social behaviour. We are individually greedy, and as a result thus socially too we become greedy. Propensity to violence in our individual hearts leads and accelerates violence in us, as a group.

Discipline if properly established by education would pave the way for liberty or freedom to become free from a physical hold by

foreign power or by any individual or group in our own country, which is only a small step. To us at first it would appear as a gigantic step. But later when we attempt to ease the weight of social and cultural barriers to liberty, we realise the gravity of our task.

Take for example our fight against poverty. It is almost impossible to enjoy liberty without being free from the frightening tentacles of poverty. Everywhere in the world we think and re-think of strategies to ensure a non-poor society of nations. What is physical liberty enjoyed by a nation if half of its total population have no meal to satisfy their hunger?

It is the same with regard to shelter or health. Malnutrition raising its ugly head, particularly in the case of the children of our world makes our notions of liberty hollow and meaningless. You could physically free a nation from foreign rulers or cruel internal rulers. But does it mean that you have assured your people to enjoy the real taste of liberty?

Violence today is a phenomenon universally manifesting itself everywhere. In a qualitative sense, today's violence is much more in its weight and quality and the power of social destruction than found in the past. Technology is used to increase the social and physical destruction that such violence creates. In homes there is violence, often towards children and women. One group would rise against the other. In most countries internal confusion and conflict make the physical liberty gained, meaningless.

In our own country, we had a different conception of liberty long before we suffered from the colonial rule. In included the freedom from inner defilements such as greed, violence, aversion and ignorance. Then the primary objective was conceived as the overcoming of such defilements which ultimately lead to liberate the human being and usher liberty to all its forms.

The goal of liberty set in such an enlightenment leads to the conscious, continued and progressive striving on the part of a human being to reach full enlightenment in a spiritual sense. We live and move with other human beings in our families, work-places, communities and the society in general. How we use our

thoughts, words and deeds in our day-to-day relationships with them are the factors that determine our progress towards spiritual development.

If within our consciousness we are advanced enough to treat all living beings with unreserved compassion or loving kindness to that extent; then we are spiritually advanced. In every moment of living, we are from moment to moment generating thoughts which we should nurture within ourselves in the form of right mindfulness to the extent that we can reach our spiritual goal and the joy of living. It is for this reason that in our day-to-day relationships an ethical code of conduct or certain principles of moral behaviour is required.

In the presence of an ethical code of conduct for the human beings and society the culture that comes into being is one of friendliness, sharing tolerance and understanding. In the absence to create such a code, the opposite tendencies such a enmity, exploitation, intolerance and misunderstanding occur. In fact, in the context of modern societies, the latter tendencies often tend to dominate. So it is not surprising that instead of living in a state of freedom, liberty and psychological security we all are leading a life of full of anxieties and indecisiveness with our endemic conflicts.

This has affected our physical and psychological environment to an extent that we are making our planet earth a place "unfit to live," and because of our own actions, violence and terrorism have become the order of the day. The social, economic and political structures we have created for a good life have become in most instances the instrument that promotes injustices and human rights violations.

A broad agenda for the realisation of liberty should begin with the human mind. According to teachings of the Buddha, the mind conditions and governs everything. Without taking this factor into consideration no worthwhile and productive basis to usher in freedom or liberty or enlightenment could be achieved. A pattern of behaviour enshrined in the sharing of resources, pleasant words in communication with each other, engaging in productive activities (causing no harm to individuals, groups or the

environment) and equality should be the behavioural pattern. Compassion within the heart, followed by sympathy, joy at the other's success and an equanimity of mind unshaken by victory or defeat, fortifies character and establishes discipline.

In the realisation of such liberty or enlightenment, two factors would be of great importance in the next century: (1) Education and technology. (2) The social and political structures that human societies build to ensure such liberty.

Education for enlightenment would have compassion, discipline, respect for life and non-violence at its base. Technology would be primarily used to usher in this enlightenment in the individual, leading to group enlightenment. Discipline established in oneself would arise out of education. Such education is not a mass of information, but a body of knowledge productively utilised for the benefit of all living beings.

So far, we in this world have thought of human beings only. Our obsession with human beings indicate this tendency. Enlightenment would eventually mean out deep concern for all life as well as environment. Cruelty to animals is almost as equal to human beings. A king who ruled Sri Lanka in the past had established a mechanism for animals to complain of cruelty done to them. A bell was rung and anyone with a complaint (even an animal) could ring it by pulling the rope. This wide perspective and understanding would make our freedom and liberty meaningful at least in the 21st century. I am sure that then we would have more knowledge of all about us and develop a better concern for the environment.

Technology if not geared to our own ideals of freedom, it would become a burden to us. In other words, our concern and respect for technology would eventually make us a slave to the very technology of which we are the real masters. Our mastery over technology could be sustained by always keeping the perspective of our freedom in our minds. Technology is needed to emphasise and develop this freedom.

The social and political structure need careful consideration. Our knowledge, experience and wisdom would be needed to tackle this formidable question--perhaps very soon in the next century. Are we satisfied with the social and political structures so far created? Can they deliver the goods in the perspective of the total freedom that we envisage?

We have seen how the politically polarized world of yesterday is now getting adjusted in one direction. Economically the change has ushered in the market economy. How could this structure add freedom and meaning to our life? Is this a new continuation of the political and economic exploitation of the past? How could human freedom be relatively made more expressive and meaningful in such a context? Could a better political and economic structure adjusted to the market economy and the free society sans the human exploitation be substituted? But what exactly is this political structure? The more important question is "who is going to do this and how and with what resources"?

Unless this question is satisfactorily answered and solutions found, all what we are talking about would be useless because we would not be in a situation to answer this most important question.

(Speech delivered at the Sixth Indira Gandhi Conference - November 1997 - The Post-Colonial World - Independence and Identities.)

THE GREATEST TRIBUTE TO MAHATMA IS BUILDING A SARVODAYA SOCIETY IN THE TWENTY FIRST CENTURY

I take this invitation extended to me by the Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti to deliver the Gandhi Memorial Lecture this year as a symbolic gesture on your part expressing recognition towards a fraternal Gandhian organisation in your neighbouring country, namely, the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement of Sri Lanka. I cannot personally claim a level of scholarship in Gandhian philosophy that qualifies me to deliver a scholarly lecture. Yet I can certainly share with you what we in Sri Lanka learnt from his life and mission and how we tried to follow his non-violent and constructive path for four decades to build a Sarvodaya Society. For giving me this opportunity I thank the Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti and specially its Director, Dr. N. Radhakrishnan .

Mahatma Gandhi undoubtedly is one of the greatest human personalities not only of our time, but of all history. Much has been written about him, and I do not wish to add to those vast literature. Instead, today I wish to describe how this great man, his character, his ideas affected me and the movement known as Sarvodaya which we started in Sri Lanka, inspired by him, and Acharya Vinoba Bhave.

For me, Gandhiji's teachings and ideas are realized best in their application in life. In his life, he practised what he taught. Buddha's teachings which we follow in Sri Lanka emphasise what is called *"yathavadi tathakari"* life that is led according to what one's ideas are. Thus there is no discrepancy between ideas and practice in the case of Gandhiji. There is no embarrassing divergence between precept and practice. In short,he practised what he preached.

I learned this lesson from him, together with the truism that in translating one's ideas to practice, it is indeed an " Experiment with Truth." In order to engage in this experiment, one has to look at and accept life as a totality. Even the word *"Sarvodaya"* — 'the welfare of all' coined by him had this basis of looking at life as a total

process. We borrowed it and influenced by our religious religious beliefs, gave it a local habitation and a name by calling it "awakening of all." In this it was Gandhiji's view of life as a total process that guided us.

The importance of Gandhiji's strategies was realised when I began my rural development work. He regarded that the lowest in society needed our attention more than anyone else. He considered the Untouchables as a symbol of the lowest and underprivileged in society. So long as such discrimination against a section of powerless people exist, Swaraj is impossible of attainment. It was this idea and his practice that motivated me to start my development work with the lowest and the most underprivileged in Sri Lanka. The Sarvodaya Movement in Sri Lanka started with our going into such underprivileged villages and living with those people.

His strategy was to kindle the spirit of kindness and continue his work with such underprivileged people. This was the spirit of kindness which the poet Tulsidas spoke of so eloquently. The *Gita* is full of this Love, this kindness which made Gandhiji turn towards the Harijans. In the loving kindness given to us by one of the great sons of India — the Gautama Buddha, we have a similar weapon with which we could work with such downtrodden and underprivileged people with our hearts infused with loving kindness.

Sarvodaya work in Sri Lanka started among such socially ostracised communities and gradually developed, gathering practical experience, almost as 'as experiment with truth in life' as Gandhiji stated. Our entire philosophy of the Movement came to be based on selecting the most underprivileged, powerless, downtrodden communities in each village and working with them. Even at present in our work , in nearly 10,000 villages, we always start with the weakest; the almost powerless, ostracised and the underprivileged groups. Working the them, we 'live in' Gandhiji.

It was from Gandhiji that we re-learned the value of human labour. I remember how in one of his writings he talked about a lad engaged in scavenging in his ashram. "I love scavenging" stated Gandhiji. This brahmin lad conducts his prayers, and at the same time considers his accomplishments incomplete unless he himself

had involved in scavenging work. That was Gandhiji's philosophy and way of action. He considered no type of physical work - even scavenging - below his human dignity. His emphasis on physical labour thus became a corner-stone of Sri Lanka 's Sarvodaya programme.

A personality has to be fully awakened to its entire potential in order to be in a position to accept all types of human labour. To be equal in quality and regard all human beings as one's own brothers and sisters. Such awakening individually as well as communally is not possible without at first appreciating physical labour and involving oneself in it. The good of the individual is contained in the good of all . what Gandhiji learned from Ruskin's 'Unto This Last,' taught him that there is no difference in the labour of a barber and that of a lawyer. In life, what is valuable is to transform it to a real life of labour and sacrifice.

In Sri Lanka we thus named our organisation "The Sarvodya Shramadana Society." Shrama is what Gandhiji spoke about so powerfully. Our objective was to involve Shrama-Labour in all activities; teach its value to the people, and through it pave the way for individual as well as group development. In other words, the development of a country depends on personality awakening based on physical labour and installing this awakening in the individual and the group.

We extended the connotation of labour to include not only physical labour but also sharing of time, resources, thought and energy. The term Labour - Shrama, loaned from Gandhiji came to stand for dynamism; the momentum of people motivated from within and the popular support that is essential for successful and sustainable development and change at a national level.

Gandhiji was interested in grassroot development. When I listened to him and afterwards I digested his writing, it dawned on me how this grassroot development has to begin in the personality of a human being, and development within the institutions in his life such as the family, and then move on to his community, country and the entire universe. The steps through which I traced this process was through the development of the human personality, human family, village communities, urban communities, the country and

finally the world.

This could be achieved by *Metta* or loving kindness which Gandhiji valued and adopted as his main strategy. This includes respect for all life — mind you, not only for human life, but for all living creatures including plants and the environment , and extending friendly thoughts towards all. This process logically leads to an action-oriented stage in which such action is undertaken with compassion in order to remove the causes of suffering in all living beings.

The immediate result of this thought and action process is dispassionate happiness. It is by living in this thought and action process I realised through my intuition the nature of Gandhiji's experiment with truth. Unless you translate thought and action to become an integral part of your life, you would not see the result of your activities. These results are reflected in intuition in experimenting with the truth.

Then comes the long -term result. That is a stage of equanimity where you are unshaken by loss or gain, poverty or wealth, conflict or suffering. I am sure Gandhiji who faced many a problematic situation in life has cultivated this *upekkha* or equanimity. His inward being, in my belief was the vehicle of *upekkha* or equanimity.

I find no fitting evidence as to the presence of this equanimity in our revered teacher than in the final poignant moments of his life. Louis Fischer has put the final moments of the great man in to words in the following manner:

" As the first bullet struck, Gandhi's foot which was in motion, descended to the ground. But he remained standing. The second bullet struck — blood began to stain Gandhi's white clothes. His face turned ashen pale. His hands which had been in the touch-palm position, descended slowly, and one arm remained momentarily on Abha's neck.

" Gandhi murmured 'Hey Rama' (Oh God!). A third shot rang. The limp body settled to the ground. His spectacles dropped to the earth. The leather sandals slipped from his feet."

In his final moment, Gandhi kept his composure — a total control of himself, because he had cultivated equanimity all through his life. It is this example of his that led to the re-discovery of *Upekka* or equanimity found in my own religious tradition.

In our Sarvodaya development activities we adopted shramadana as the main tool which involved all types of physical activity connected mainly with agriculture. at first and then in other vocations. The basic needs of people were met by Shramadana or gift of labour, or the sharing principle. Added to this we had *Bhoodana, Gramadana* and also deriving inspiration from our Buddhist background in the form of *dharmadana* (sharing of knowledge), *danadana* (sharing of wealth), *Waidyadana* (medical aid or sharing of health), and finally, emulating the Bodhisatva ideal the dedication of one's entire life to the service of all living beings (Jivadana) . The Antyodaya principle of concentrating our attention first on the most backward, the least powerful and the lowest in society too stem from Gandhi's vision.

Gandhiji fervently believed that India's future lay in its vast number of rural communities in the villages. In Sri Lanka, which is very small when compared to India, I believed that it was the village which needed our attention first. Village development, known also as rural development was initiated in order to dispel ignorance, inequality and powerlessness and conscientize the villagers; making them feel that they are human beings with great potential which needs to be put into action and realised.

Non-violence was Gandhiji's main weapon. I firmly believed in this. This again is Avihimsa or Ahimsa as preached by the Buddha. It is a strategy that marshalls all creative forces inside you and Gandhiji's genius developed it into a Truth Force - Satyagraha to fight all forms of social, political or economic injustices. The word Satyagraha — a force which is truth , came into being as an integral component of gandhian action agenda.

Gandhiji' s words reverberate in my mind. "A man who believes in the efficacy of this doctrine finds in the ultimate stage, when he is about to reach the goal, the whole world at its feet." It is the Ahimsa principle that helped to evolve our philosophy of social transformation. We experimented with Ahimsa at the rural level and

found it positive in its impact. From this micro-level we gradually moved into macro-level; the national problems, and applied our non-violent approach.

Fortunately, our own religious tradition has implanted this ahimsa doctrine in our minds. But to our pre-occupation with various material advantages and imported doctrines, some of us began to prefer violence — the super power of arms and ammunition instead of non-violence. Our own problems at national level are even today attempted to be solved by violence. The eventual result is the inordinate loss of precious human lives and no gain achieved by anyone in society.

In the village, non-violence has helped us to solve many a problem. Awareness-building and marshalling people's power leading to social empowerment enabled us to bring final solutions to the people. In other words, by learning to apply non-violent principles, people discovered the solutions themselves.

From the beginning I had faith in the common man and small-scale activities. You all know how Gandhiji emphasised small-scale enterprises. Today we call it appropriate technology — a technology that is suitable for both human beings and their environment. He always emphasised self-dependency. We should try our best to depend on what we have, without becoming subservient to others.

A dependent economy or a society is not the Gandhian ideal . In our Sarvodaya Movement in Sri Lanka, we attempt to make each village a self-supporting unit as far as possible. I believe this is not very far from the Gandhian ideal of village republics. Having identified ten basic human needs, we motivated the people to satisfy these with their own efforts depending on their own resources.

Among such needs, we find a clean and beautiful environment, a clean and adequate supply of water, clothing, food security, basic health care, energy needs,basic communication, total education and spiritual and cultural needs.

Basic needs of human beings are simple. These can be satisfied when everyone becomes conscious of the other's needs. A total transformation of the mind enables one to perceive the other

person's needs in our own context,and thus refrain as far as possible from amassing material to satisfy our needs while denying such basic needs and satisfaction in others. This leads to a society where exploitation is reduced to a minimum.The value of education and communication, particularly communication technology in total education here has to be recognized. Social transformation resulting in a non-exploitative society could only be ushered in through such total education and communication technology in a spiritual-cultural environment.

We are facing the Twenty-first Century. With the dawn of this Century, the value of the Mahatma's ideas and strategies would become more relevant and important. I remember the new ideas and practices of education we in Sri Lankan Sarvodya gained from Gandhiji. The concept of education through life, for life and throughout life heavily influenced us. The *Khadi* Movement with its emphasis on being engaged in simple physical labour, from which we could inwardly and materially profit, both individually and collectively has much for others to emulate. Pioneer Gandhian educators like Shri E.W. Ariyanayakam and Shrimati Asha Devi Ariyanayakam visited Sri Lanka on several occasions and inspired us with Mahatma Gandhi's original ideas on education.

This total education process with personality awakening and leading to an entire social transformation is the only answer to the world's pressing problems today. We hear of violence against women, sexual exploitation of children as in the present case in Belgium , and sometimes child abuse in some parts of South Asia. Although legal remedies are necessary, the compete answer does not lie in such legal and law enforcement solutions. Through education employed to its fullest capacity with the help of modern communication technology, a total education process should be launched. Violence or harm to others should be made to be understood as a harm done to oneself. Non-violence should added as an integral aspect of primary as well as secondary socialization.

No doubt in recent times we have observed the rise of 'open economies' and 'free market policies.' A major change is also seen in the attitude to environment and the inclusion of 'environmental costs' in economic considerations. Nowhere in the world is it possible now to start any large scale economic enterprise without

environmental considerations being properly addressed.The increasing recognition by women to the economy was also witnessed during the last two decades.

In this background, could we think of a universal commitment to full employment as something feasible? Is it not more realistic to think of a Full - Engagement Society by applying the concept of Right Livelihood? If we look at employment not as a basic need but as a means to produce some good or service to meet a basic need, the entire problem becomes clear. Full engagement of all in the satisfaction of the basic needs of all is Sarvodaya's objective. According to this, while a segment of the community within the the capacity of the economy is employed in agricultural, agro-industrial, industrial and other similar activities related to production and distribution, the rest of the community may be gainfully engaged in those constructive activities contributing to the improvement of their quality of life.

Finally, I can do no better than quote Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru who on the demise of the great Mahatma , stated:

" Our country gave birth to a mighty one, and he shone like a beacon not only for India but for the whole world. He brought us to freedom, and the world marvelled at the way he did it..... democracy demands discipline, tolerance and mutual regard. Freedom demands for the freedom of others. In a democracy, changes are made by mutual discussion and persuasion and not by violent means..... It was not for a few privileged persons that Gandhiji strove for and died for . We have to strive for the same ideal in the same way . Then only shall we be worthy to say "Mahatma Gandhiki jai.'

Thank you.

(Mahatma Gandhi Memorial Talk was delivered by Dr. A.T.Ariyaratne, Founder and President of the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement of Sri Lanka at the invitation of Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti on the 18th September 1996 in New Delhi.)

BUILDING A SHARING COMMUNITY : RICH AND POOR IN ASIA

I am honoured to have been invited to address the 5th General Session of the Asian Conference on Religion and Peace in this historic city of Ayuththaya in Siam. I like to extend my thanks to the Executive Committee for this kindness. The subject I have been given is " Building a Sharing Community - Rich and Poor in Asia.."

The Second World War ended nearly fifty years ago. Immediately after, some countries like India and Sri Lanka got their political freedom from their former colonial masters while others had to launch further struggles before they could become free. Yet most of those countries could not attain a level of political stability and social peace which could have paved way for them to reach higher levels of economic well-being for their peoples mainly due to the fragmented nature of their societies which was a colonial heritage. This led to internal conflicts and civil wars more often than not with overt or covert interventions by regional or superpowers.

Religions, the essence of which is the awakening of spirituality in the human personality, lost its principal role during the colonial period thus becoming a part of the problem rather than a part of the solution. So the post-second world war period to the present times has witnessed more human and other resources being continuously diverted to war, defence and security efforts by governments rather than to build sustainable forms of peaceful development to improve the human condition. If we are to change this situation a re-awakening of spirituality in ourselves, our religious institutions and their custodians is necessary.

Some of us gathered here may have formal responsibilities in religious institutions. But most of us are ordinary lay women and men who believe and attempt to practise our own religious precepts as most ordinary people do.

In other words most of us are followers of religion without institutional responsibilities but believe in interfaith dialogue and peace. National Committees, Regional Conferences and its global body, the World Conference on Religion and Peace have already contributed significantly to bring about better understanding between diverse religious faiths. While this effort should certainly continue into the future it is imperative that we should address seriously the issue of poverty and powerlessness in relation to religiousness or what I prefer to call spirituality.

Sharing is a much better word than gifting, giving, or aid. It signifies a sense of community. In sharing there is no giver or receiver thus avoiding egoism and pride as well as a feeling of inferiority. In the practice of sharing the dignity and respect of all human beings are given equal recognition. The forms of sharing may vary from person to person. One may share one's wealth, land or other material resources with those who have less of these. Others may share their skills, knowledge and labour. Development of loving-kindness towards all living beings and sharing of compassion with others is a practice that can be cultivated by every religious person. *"Sabba danam Dhamma danam jinati."* Of all forms of gifts sharing or gift of dhamma or the spiritual teaching is supreme" says the Buddha.

Building a Sharing Community in Asia is a very practical programme that we can undertake. Our cultural backgrounds nourished by our respective religious teachings have provided us with a suitable environment to successfully launch such endeavours in our countries. With active participation of people professing various religions we in Sri Lanka have successfully built such a Movement which can be cited as an example. This is the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement.

Sarvodaya Shramadana means the ' awakening of all by sharing our time, thoughts, efforts, skills and other resources.' The principal motivation for such acts of sharing should come from religious or spiritual motivation. There may be other motivations based on good feelings, a sense of justice and even intellectual reasons. Sharing is a practice that can extend from one individual to another and to the global community. It can be practised at all levels from families to villages, to urban and national

communities extending to the world community. All forms and levels of sharing should be accompanied by qualities such as right speech, constructive activities and equality in association.

For thirty nine years the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement has practised the principle of sharing bringing together tens of thousands of people within Sri Lanka as well as from outside to build a 'no-poverty no-affluence society.' The beginning has to be with their own communities where they live. The methods used are non-violent, constructive, self-reliant, and participatory. Today within Sri Lanka A Ten Thousand Villages Development Programme is implemented on this principle. In several other countries also volunteers who have worked with Sarvodaya in Sri Lanka are implementing similar programmes in ways as applicable to their localities and their needs. I will try from now onwards to give a brief description of the theory and practice underlying this kind of sustainable development.

First and foremost is helping the village community to come together at a psychological level where they begin to feel as members of one large family. This will happen only if they come together physically to perform a task that would commonly benefit them by sharing their time and efforts. They can discuss and agree on a task that can be performed with their own labour and resources without depending on outside patronage or help. It may be an access road to their village, a series of wells to satisfy their clean drinking water needs, an irrigation canal to supply water to their rice fields, a building for their pre-school or community meetings and so on.

Self-reliance and community participation at all stages of planning and implementation are very important factors right from the inception of such a village reawakening project. The village community as a whole sit down and plan out all aspects of implementing the project including the resource needs, the strategies to carry out the various tasks and the selection of leaders who are assigned to share responsibilities. At initial shramadana camps they seek the assistance of experienced leaders in the neighbouring villages, or full-time trained workers from the divisional, district or national level Sarvodaya organisations. The shramadana camp is the training ground for functional leaders

and the activity which inspires, educate and provide orientation for the community as a whole for sustainable self-development.

A psychological oneness is established after several shramadana camps where they accomplish the tasks they set about to do. A second stage in the development process starts with the formation of children's groups, mothers' groups, youth groups, farmers' groups and so on and relating these groups to launch upon other basic human needs satisfaction programmes. At this stage a variety of training facilities for village leaders are provided by Sarvodaya Development Education centres to assist them to continue with their self-development programmes. Various services provided by the government are also facilitated at this stage to help their efforts. This stage is generally known as the Social Infrastructure and Leadership Development stage.

At the third stage a representative village organisation consisting of all age groups including children above seven years of age is organised. It is this village society that takes over the over-all development functions of the village. Steps are taken to register this society with governmental agencies so that they get a legal recognition. It is at this stage a solid foundation for the development of the village economy is laid. Different committees take over responsibilities for different activities such as spiritual development and interreligious co-operation, and conservation and improvement of the environment, health and education. Savings, Credit and Micro-enterprises are handled by a team trained by Sarvodaya Economic Enterprises Development Services of the Movement which has a countrywide net-work.

When it comes to the fourth stage the village community is more or less independent and during the fifth stage the village leaders help nine other Sarvodaya villages in the vicinity to develop their potential for self-development. In ten thousand villages out of Twenty Four Thousand villages in Sri Lanka this kind of village transformation led by a thousand pioneering villages is taking place today. Over two thousand villages are in the fourth and fifth stages of Sarvodaya method of development.

People have to be helped to empower themselves in six sectors, namely, spiritual-moral-cultural-social-economic and political. In addition to the village level institution building there

should be institutional support available to them at divisional, district and national levels. Sarvodaya has set up independent specialist institutions at these levels from which village societies can draw knowledge, skills, technical know-how and even get access to outside capital as loans or grants. In other words all these processes are integrated to combat poverty and powerlessness of our rural poor thus giving them an opportunity to take their future to their own hands.

Our villages cannot awaken, function and survive in a vacuum. Village Awakening has to be necessarily accompanied by a parallel urban-community, national-community and world community awakening and transformation. Some but not much faith may be put on "international co-operative action."Eradication of poverty has been on the international agenda for several decades. Yet poverty is increasing. The eradication of illiteracy was on UNESCO's agenda at its birth. After fifty years the world has more illiterates than ever before in its history. The reduction of the arms race between the super powers is a success story clouded by the continuing development of destructive explosive nuclear devices by some countries. Within countries ethnic wars, group violence, personal violence and structural violence continue and these appear to be on the increase. Peace on earth is still a distant dream.

"Equitable sharing" is not consistent with the "open economy" and "free trade."Free competition,supply and demand are the forces which govern the economy at whatever level. "Sharing" is not in the economic vocabulary other than in the sense of "purchasing one's share." If you do not have what it takes to purchase your share you just do not get it. People do not die of starvation for lack of food. They die of starvation because they do not have the purchasing power. Some people having purchasing power and some not having purchasing power is again an inevitable concomitant of the "open economy"

Supply and demand also imply a "supply of labour." It is the cheap labour in the developing countries which has led to the starting of much industrial activity in them. Industrial or economic activity shifts according to, among other factors, the cost of labour. It is in the interest of the "owners of capital" to see

to it that there is always a pool of labour to recruit from. It is in their interests to increase the pool and not to decrease the pool.The free play of economic forces postulates a point of equilibrium between supply and demand and thus theoretically there should be unemployment.

It appears, therefore, the "employment problem" is going to be a continuing one unless there is some thinking not just about economics but life on earth in its fullest sense.

The kind of village awakening movement I briefly described is the kind of alternative thinking we need today. Instead of trying to build a "Full Employment Society" cannot we think of a "Right Livelihood Society" where all are fully engaged in constructive work ? Cannot we act on this thought and share our experiences using the most modern communication technology to which even the organised and empowered poor can have access ?

Thank you.

(A talk delivered by Dr. A.T.Ariyaratne, President of the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement of Sri Lanka to the Fifth General Session of the Asian Conference on Religion and Peace in the city of Ayuththaya in Thailand October 15th to 19th 1996.)

BUILDING A GLOBAL CIVIL SOCIETY OF RIGHT LIVELIHOOD IN THE 21ST CENTURY- SOME LEARNING GUIDELINES FOR VOLUNTEERS

The Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement of Sri Lanka and Japan Youth Volunteers Association have a long standing friendship and cordial relationship for nearly three decades now. Our concern, commitment and continuity in our programmes for the benefit of youth are internationally known. Certainly we will continue our work in the 21st century which is fast approaching. It is very timely that we have very clear directions in our minds as to what we are going to do together, specially the role of our youth in building a new global society. Unless we have a Vision, our Mission as volunteers will not be that successful. Therefore, it is very appropriate that you are meeting here to think and discuss about Volunteer Learning for Building a Global Civil Society in the 21st Century. I am happy and thankful to JYVA for inviting me to speak on this subject.

Just before I sat down to write down the notes for this lecture I read the following news items in page 4 of the Bangkok Post of Sunday the 20th 1996:

> *"**Little girl burns herself to death** Tokyo - An 11-year-old Japanese girl burned herself to death on Friday after being scolded by her mother for untidiness.*
>
> *The primary school pupil in Numazu, Shizuoka prefecture, poured kerosine over herself and lit a fire with a lighter outside an apartment building near her home.*
>
> *The girl was already dead when firemen, alerted by a neighbour,arrived at the site, police said. The case is being treated as suicide. - AFP"*

Turn to any newspaper in any language anywhere in the world. This is the kind of dismal story we have to read - 'cases' of suicide, murder, homicide, poisoning, terrorism, AIDS, floods, earthquakes, rapes, pollution, child-abuse, racial conflicts and so on. We hear and read about these 'cases' and 'treat them as suicide' or whatever other name we give it and forget about the

whole thing with complete indifference. Yet whenever we get any opportunity we talk about the 'global village' 'our common earth' 'one planet one people' thus expressing verbally our solidarity with others who inhabit this planet.

'This is another case of suicide by a little girl unknown to me. So what?' and we dismiss it from our mind and we go about undisturbed with our normal life.

If this same kind of thing happened to us or a person near and dear to us then our response would be different. We will go to the extent of even doing everything within our power to prevent the same kind of thing happening to anyone else to whom we have no relationship whatsoever. Have you ever thought why this is so? Why do we act, react, or respond differently when the same kind of disaster happens at one time to 'me or mine' and at another time to 'them or theirs.' Was this the same during generations that preceded us when we had more humane, simpler and closely knit societies even without the advantage of modern communication facilities? I remember fifty years ago when we were children if any incident of the type we are discussing now happened at that time that would be the concern of the entire nation if not the then known world. I believe this would have been the same situation in most countries at that time. What we now call the civil society, much more than the rulers or governments, would take the initiative to go into the matter in a responsible manner for the good of ALL in society and take corrective action.

My contention is that there was a critical mass of global consciousness in our societies when the civil society was more important in most matters than the governments, armed and police forces, bureaucracies, private corporations, competitive economies, mass communication media and international organisations. The qualitative nature of the civil society was primarily dependent upon the quality of the individual, the nature of the family unit and socio-cultural milieu of the immediate neighbourhood and the rural or urban community within which the families lived. I am not suggesting that everything was rosy and fine in our'glorious' past and every individual was a spiritually advanced person. The question I am raising is, was there a sufficient mass of people in our societies who considered themselves as a part of the global village not because somebody from outside looked at modern transport and communication

systems and said so, but because in their own consciousness the thought of oneness of humanity prevailed for some reason or other? In short was there a more effective but an unseen, involuntary, communication process at the level of consciousness of human beings because of their closeness to their families, their social and cultural environment and the nature around them?

Today we have mostly lost this personal touch. We are bombarded with so much of information, we have lost the ability to quieten our mind and think independently. We are so busy with the 'rat race 'of acquiring material things and non-material things which help us to have as much of it and power over others. Parents have no time for their children. Children have no time for their parents or other family members. The time we spent with our neighbours is taken over by the television. There is no time at all look within ourselves and reflect on what this whole existence is for. In other words as individual human beings we have got alienated from our own personalities, our parents and family members, neighbours and the like. In a world that has physically shrunk we have become very lonely in a psychological sense.

Our knowledge and even the concern about the negative megatrends in the world will not help us for a constructive commitment as volunteers in the 21st century unless we first create in our own minds a new global consciousness.

We have to remember that the world is not outside us. It is within my fathom long body. If the body has no consciousness or if I am physically dead then for all purposes a physical world does not exist for me. if I remember this fact then I should cultivate in my own consciousness an attitude of mind in which I naturally feel closely related to the rest of the living world.

A good way to cultivate this mental attitude is practicing Loving Kindness towards oneself and extending it progressively to others. The best time to begin this is as we wake up in the morning. As we wake up, while still lying in bed or seated in a relaxed way, mindfully breathe in and breathe out a few times. While continuing to breathe in and out normally, think: "May this body which is made up of the four great elements of earth, water, air and heat be in proper harmony and keep my body healthy. May my mind be free from desires, ill-will and ignorance. May I be well and happy in body and mind." Thus we begin the day by

giving loving kindness to ourselves. Next we extend it to say our mother, father, wife, children, neighbours, whole of humanity and the rest of the living world. This practice for a few minutes daily as we get up in the morning and as we lie down to sleep is very helpful to develop a peaceful mind. Whenever we see somebody, or hear somebody's voice or think of somebody, if the first thought that comes to our mind is a thought of loving kindness towards that person, whoever that person be, then we are a part of the transformation process of global consciousness. The trees, the birds, the clouds, the breeze, the winds, the water and sounds we experience become meaningful to us. The dangers they are faced with become our own concern. The commitment to take meaningful action originate from within us. We become global or planetary citizens by an inner transformation of our consciousness rather than by getting our minds conditioned by organised information thrust upon us.

This kind of right understanding of reality beginning with oneself is necessary for the youth of today who are preparing to contribute to build a better, more peaceful, and sustainable society in the 21st century. There is no question it is the youth who should take leadership. A 21st century community leader, I believe, should strive to cultivate the following qualities first and foremost even before thinking of taking to social action to transform society for the better.

1. **Reverence for all living beings including the animal and plant kingdoms.**
2. **Acceptance of Non-violence in all situations in thoughts, words and deeds.**
3. **Make a living through Right Livelihood and promote it among others.**
4. **Life-long love for learning and acquisition of mindfulness and wisdom.**
5. **Association with the right kind of friends who will enhance the above qualities.**
6. **A firm determination to commit to serve dispassionately and self-lessly.**

In short let us begin the transformation with our own lives and then step into the broad world.

Mr. Hiroshi Kouroki, Secretary-General and Board Member of JYVA in his address to the 14th IAVE Biennial International Conference held this year in South Africa referred to three incidents that took place in Japan recently. They were the horrible crimes committed by a "cult" led by a "guru," widespread and criminal bullying of juniors by senior students and the terrible earthquake that struck the city of Kobe.

The above mentioned types of man-made and natural disasters are not isolated incidents. These things happen everywhere in the world. They are only global symptoms of man's inability to (a) discipline his mind, (b) live in harmony with nature and protect life support systems and (c) create sustainable social, economic and political institutions where the Joy of Living for All (what Mahatma Gandhi called Sarvodaya) is ensured. The fact that there were so many people who volunteered to bring relief to those who needed help, as Mr. Kouroke further mentioned in his speech gives us a ray of hope for the future on which we have to build. As Buddha taught us 2500 years ago at the root of all these evils is man's greed, aversions, and ignorance of reality.

Most people belong to the civil society. Therefore, on our own free will we should volunteer to take the challenge into our hands and re-educate humanity and all institutions that human beings have created to re-establish and respect the following Cosmic Laws if we are to survive on this planet.

1. **Obey the principles governing the natural genetic order.**
2. **Do not do anything that disturbs the natural order of seasons.**
3. **Re-establish faith in the laws of causality.**
4. **Awaken yourselves to truths of spiritual awakening.**
5. **Accept the supremacy of the mind and strive to keep it pure.**

An understanding and practice of these laws will give us enough mental strength to choose between what is right and what is wrong. We will develop self-reliance and self-confidence. No false "guru" or doctrine will be able to control our minds and mislead us to do evil. Above all we will be free to choose the right path in our lives for the good of ourselves and others.

When we steadfastly establish ourselves in loving kindness, discipline ourselves in daily life and are knowledgeable about the laws that govern man and nature then we can progressively develop an agenda of activities to contribute our share to build the new world according to the intelligence, knowledge, skills, resources and time we have at our disposal. One can begin at home, with neighbours, in the work place or the larger community, be it in one's country or anywhere in the world. As long as one is engaged in right livelihood, which means a way of earning one's living without injuring living beings, making and selling arms, intoxicants and harmful drugs, polluting and destroying the environment etc., in that engagement itself one can render a tremendous service for social renewal.

In conclusion I like to make a special appeal to the youth of Japan. Your parents, grandparents and elders set an example to the world community by re-building an economy from a country completely devastated by the Second World War. You are the only country to have experienced the horrors of the atomic bombs. In today's world of nuclear armaments those atomic bombs which were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki were like toys. So firmly establish in your minds thoughts of peace at all times and do everything possible to get all weapons of war banned from human society.

Most people in the world are poor. No problem is caused by a single factor. You must try to understand the interrelated and multifarious causes that bring about poverty, powerlessness, wars and other human sufferings and do everything in your power to build a poverty-free human society. For this you have to change existing social, political, economic and technological structures and processes and build new and more appropriate ones. Within your own country you possess both the spirituo-cultural and technological resources to bring about this transformation during your life time, if not ours, your elder generation. I have absolute trust in your capacity to capture this Vision that I have tried to give you and make it your Mission in life.

Thank You.

(A talk delivered by Dr. A. T. Ariyaratne, the Founder and President of the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement of Sri Lanka at Japan Youth Volunteers Association " The 13th National Volunteer Learning Seminar for Leaders of Teens' Volunteer Activity" (3rd and 4th November 1996 at NYC, Tokyo)

EXPERIENCING PEACE WHILE ENGAGING IN EXPERIMENTS BASED ON MORAL PRINCIPLES

I thank Prof. B.N.Saraswati for inviting me to this conference on "Culture and Peace: The Experience and the Experiment" which is being held at the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts. The subject I have been asked to speak on is " Experiencing Peace While Engaging in Experiments Based on Moral Principles."

My entire presentation will be based on just three examples out of a series of real experiments carried over a period of nearly four decades, the experiences gained from them and how we drew lessons for our future directions from these.

One: In mid Nineteen Fifties when we began the *Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement* the Government of Sri Lanka had identified about one hundred and fifty village communities who were subjected to all kinds of social, economic and political discriminations and had established a special branch in the Rural Development Department to help these communities. This branch was called the Backward Communities Development Branch and was manned by an excellent Head and several highly motivated and committed rural development officers. What was later called the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement was started in one of these so-called backward communities by us who, at that time, were students and teachers mostly from leading high schools in the capital city.

As young people we recognized a serious flaw in our use of language when referring to these people which in turn was giving rise to a superiority complex in our minds. I am sure that in spite of the good things we were doing for them and with them such as constructing a road to their village, digging a series of drinking water wells, doing repairs to the small cottages where they were living, putting up a village school building and so on, yet we were doing a serious damage to their *'psyche'* as well as ours by calling

them *'backward'* communities. Worse still we referred to these villages in our printed programmes by the names of their castes. Even unintentionally we were creating an *'inferiority'* complex in the minds of these people while we who were from well-to-do families from outside were bloating up our small *'egos'* at the expense of a permanent psychological damage we were doing to these people.

Immediately after this realization came to us, may be after two years of working in these villages, we dropped the word *'backward'* and names of *'castes'* from our spoken words as well as the written languages and printed programmes. No human being or community of people should be labelled *'backward or outcast'* for the simple reason that they are poor or powerless.

In the words of Lord Buddha **"No one becomes an outcaste (vasala) by birth. No one becomes a highcaste (brahmana) by birth. One becomes an outcaste by one's actions. One becomes a high caste by one's actions."**

As long as we retain *'caste' labels,* the *caste system* will remain. As long as the caste system remains there will be discriminations, injustices and conflict situations. Today Sarvodaya is working in over 10,000 village communities and no one is interested or talks of castes or caste differences. It simply is not in our thinking or day to day language usage. So any discriminatory deeds based on this ignorant mental conditioning are not heard of in our Sarvodaya villages.

Two: Let me take your mind to a village scenario where the community is striving to build up a better life for themselves by harnessing their self-reliance and community participation. They can conceive of their situation as hopeless if they only look at the dark side of the reality of their life such as lack of basic necessities of life like water, health care, shelter, education, a means to livelihood and so on. They also see political and economic injustices they are subjected to. They see corruption, waste and destruction of public and natural resources around them which is truly a manifestation of structural violence in their level of the society.

Some from outside their village advocate violence and truly adopt violent revolutionary means in attempts to destroy the establishment. Violent clashes occur and lives of the innocent as well as the not-innocent are lost. Some are cast into prisons without a trial. The establishment makes this an excuse to take away the fundamental freedoms villagers so far enjoyed by enforcing emergency powers which they come to possess when in power. The village community now falls from the frying pan to the fire.

The scenario I am referring to in a Sarvodaya village is different. They see a small spiritual spark in their cultural memory. Here the villagers are seeking an alternative path to overcome almost insurmountable obstacles they face in their everyday life. They have inherited a cultural tradition which rejects hatred, violence and revengefulness as means to resolving conflicts. **"Hatred does not cease by hatred. Hatred ceases by non-hatred. This is the eternal Law."** They remember these words of the Buddha. How can they translate this noble precept into concrete actions which will help them to bring about a change in their life both physically and spiritually? In other words they are trying a non-violent revolutionary path to win justice and freedom.

Besides their cultural heritage what people in our poor communities have is their power to think, to feel and to work physically. Can their cultural values motivate them to harness this power voluntarily to bring about a satisfaction of even some of their basic human needs? Can the success of such an experiment create a fundamental transformation in the collective consciousness of all of them? One of the instruments they use for this experiment is what is called a shramadana (Sharing of labour, skills, resources etc. for common good) camp.

Shramadana camps are a regular feature in Sarvodaya villages. Besides six to eight hours a day of manual work they do, three to four hours of spirituo-cultural activities are also performed in these camps to build that collective consciousness.

What is called Family Gatherings are held before starting work, after the mid-day community meal and after work in the

evenings. This is also called psychological infra-structure building in the community. In addition to the village community others from surrounding Sarvodaya villages also come to these camps to participate and gift their labour and skills.

The physical work they do is decided upon by them depending on a felt-need like an irrigation canal or a tank bund. What I am trying to describe here is not the physical aspect of this experiment. Let us listen to a young volunteer who steps forward and calls the attention of, maybe 300 to 500 volunteers, children, youth, women and men before they go out in their work teams to the work sites.

"Dear elders, brothers and sisters,

In a few moments we all will be going to the work sites to share our labour for the well-being of all. Our physical labour will certainly result in an accomplished physical task. No doubt this will help us to satisfy a need we have long felt. But more important is the human qualities we develop during the course of the day when we interact with one another. We will interact through thoughts that originate in our minds. We will interact through words that leave our tongues. We will interact through every deed and conduct that is performed by our bodily actions. In short we have to be mindful of every thought, word and deed from now onwards. To the extent we can transform ourselves as human beings, we can transform our families, our villages, our country and our world.

Let us close our eyes lightly. Keep our heads straight. Have a slight smile on our face. Let us now meditate for a few minutes. Bring our minds to our breathing in and breathing out. Let us breathe in and breathe out mindfully. Think. May my mind be free from greed, illwill and ignorance and be healthy. May all of us gathered here be well and healthy in body and mind. May all those who work with me today appear to me as members of my own family. May the entire humanity be well and happy. May the entire living world be happy and peaceful..... Thank you. Now the team leaders can take their groups to their respective work sites. "

This kind of a meditation is practised before, during and after every kind of physical or social activity. Special songs are composed and sung at these events. Dances, dramas and other related cultural activities remind us over and over again that we are one human family, compassion towards all life should be our guiding thought, we should share whatever we can with others, we should learn to get joy out of service. We should develop the capacity to accept name and blame, gain and loss with equal detachment and equanimity.

When people are reminded of the four ancient principles of social conduct, namely, sharing - pleasant language - constructive activity and equality in association - and are provided with a physical, social and psychological environment like a Shramadana camp to practice them, it is our experience that the noblest qualities that human beings and human society possess can still be made to manifest and flourish.

If I may summarise, a Shramadana activity properly organised, provides for the following:

- An opportunity for any participant from within the community or outside to practice Respect for all life, Compassionate service towards others, Dispassionate joy arising out of such actions and Equanimity.
- An opportunity for the community to practice Sharing, Pleasant discourse, Constructive action and Equality.
- An opportunity for the community to make decisions affecting their life.
- Development of a sense of togetherness in the community. Helping each other and learning from each other irrespective of usual divisive considerations such as social position, wealth, political beliefs, family feuds etc.
- An opportunity for non-traditional leadership to emerge, particularly from the youth and women.
- An opportunity for people to show their talents in aesthetic, cultural or technical activities.
- A sense of pride, accomplishment and confidence at having met some common need largely through their own

effort.

- An opportunity for learning and acquiring organisational skills.

On this psychological foundation the community can now develop a social infrastructure where pre-school children, school-going children, youth, women and mothers, farmers and craftsmen and so on can be organised into functional groups. After some time they can form themselves into a legally constituted society which can plan and implement welfare and development projects they think are feasible. Sarvodaya Divisional Centres, the District Centres, Development Education Centres and the Headquarters provides leadership training, skills training and other needed services for them to help themselves.

Three: From psycho-social infra-structure creation, through organisation building and legalisation, individuals and communities have to be helped and guided to build their own instruments and methodologies for economic and political well-being. Mahatma Gandhi's vision of Gram Swaraj or Lord Buddha's teachings on a Right Livelihood (Samma Ajiva) society provide us with a lot of insights into this stage of the experiment. This experiment including the economic and political aspects is already going on in over 2500 advanced villages out of the 10000 villages where the movement is active. These villages are going through what we describe as social, economic and political empowerment stages of the national experiment.

The very fact that this people's movement working towards non-violent transformation of man and society has survived amidst a lot of or many obstacles shows that change based on moral principles is still possible. The obstacles faced by Sarvodaya from around mid 1986 to mid 1994 were of an unprecedented nature. During this period Sarvodaya was persecuted by the State with all its might.

This kind of non-violent social transformation, I believe from my experience, is the only alternative way to counteract and reverse destructive forces globally operative today. Both the leaders and the led have to realize the collective suicidal danger we all are facing and overpower the culture of self-

aggrandizement that has blinded our sanity. Our leaders should abandon petty mindedness and become large-hearted. We all should turn to the spring of spirituality which is still within our reach, depollute and clean the stream of morality that flows from it and on either side of the stream build a culture of peace, sustainability and joy of living.

May you all be well and happy.

(A talk delivered by Dr. A.T. Ariyaratne at Asian Conference on Culture and Peace: The Experience and The Experiment (Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts- New Delhi Nov. 25th to 29th, 1996)

POLITICS, POLITICIANS AND SUSTENANCE OF A CONTENTED CIVIL SOCIETY

When I was invited by my friend Mr. Johnson J. Edayaranmula on behalf of ADIC - INDIA to deliver the second Lakshmi N. Menon Memorial International Lecture in Trivandrum it was with a good deal of hesitation I accepted it. Before I was born she was already in the international scene as an international youth activist. When I was yet a high school student she was a shining star in the Indian political arena trying to shed light to rebuild a nation whose social, political and economic moorings were shattered by decades of turbulent winds of colonial rule. During my teenage years when I was looking for heroes to get inspired to direct my own future Mrs. Lakshmi Menon was in the forefront with world teachers and heroes who became legends during their own life time like the Great Mahatma Gandhi, Shri Aurobindo, Pundit Jawaharlal Nehru, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Dr. S. Radakrishnan and others of similar stature. When I met her last and had long hours of conversation with her, she was well past her ninetieth year and I myself was a man of over sixty. Whatever the elevated position she held in political office or social ladder she was a great human being to her last breath and was worthy of emulation by us.

I congratulate and put on record my admiration to Alcohol and Drug Information Centre (ADIC) - India, for initiating this Memorial Lecture Series. There is no better way to remember and perpetuate the memory of this great daughter of Kerala and India than to remind ourselves from time to time the values she stood for, the virtues she lived and the services she rendered to humanity. For me it is a great honour to have been given the opportunity to pay my humble tribute to her by delivering this lecture.

Mrs Lakshmi Menon spent the better part of her life in politics. She was a politician par excellence. All her life she worked for the betterment of civil society. Mrs. Lakshmi Menon spent the better

part of her life in politics. She was a very active member in the Rajya Sabha. Having retired from active politics in 1966, she turned her attention to cultural and social welfare services among Indian women. In her book entitled "Position of Women", written for the series of Oxford pamphlets on Indian Affairs, she has described the unfortunate lot of Indian women and pointed out in what areas government attention was necessary for the uplift of women and called upon the women of India to continuously claim their rights from society and the government. While her primary interest has been the improvement of the lot and status of women, especially Indian women and actively supported social reforms relating to women, all throughout her life Mrs. Lakshmi Menon worked for the betterment of civil society. Any activity that contributed for the nurture and sustenance of good life and society, such as combating illiteracy, alcoholism and drug addiction, violation of human rights, specially those of women and children, was her concern and she committed herself fully to those causes until her last breath. Therefore, I thought one way I can pay my tribute to her is speaking on a subject that would have been very relevant to her life and mission. I chose the subject ***"Politics, Politicians and Sustenance of a Contented Society"***

What is politics? Ask this question from a man in the street. He or she will promptly say, "Don't talk about it. It is dirty. It creates all the problems in our society. It is evil. The more you keep out of it the better it is for you." What about politicians? The prompt reply will be "Most of them, if not all, are corrupt, selfish and power-hungry. They deceive and give false promises to the people to get their votes. The less you talk about them the better it is". What about the society we are living in? Can we ever build and sustain a contented civil society? "We have gone too far in the wrong direction. This trend can never be reversed. We will have to bear with it and make the best out of it for ourselves. Any way who are we to fight these rich, unscrupulous and powerful giants in our society? Safer and better to mind our business".

This may be an over-generalization. Still I believe that most of the people in civil society have abandoned all hopes of a total renewal or regeneration of our society in spite of the fact they all know we are going in the wrong direction. When you abandon hope then you don't get committed and participate to bring about a

transformation for the better. At the same time even involuntarily you become a part and parcel of the dominant degenerative forces by your own indifference and passive acceptance of the status quo. Even those well-intentioned good people in politics may also become the victims of the same dominant degrading process and silently make the best of it for their own survival. If not they will quit politics. So the truism goes that "Politics has no place for honest, educated and self-less people."

Recently I read a very interesting and classic book titled "An Earth Saving Revolution" by Dr. Teruo Higa, a Japanese scientist, researcher and scholar in which he very clearly shows "A means to resolve our world's problems through Effective Microorganisms (EM), (published by Sunmark Publishing Inc. Shinjuku, Tokyo.) I am not going to speak about the contents of that book which is an entirely different subject. But when I read about Dr. Higa's research with micro-organisms I found a remarkable resemblance between the behaviour of these tiny microorganisms and us, the self-pronounced 'most developed' creature on this planet. In Dr. Higa's words (Prologue: EM-Hope For The Planet , page 27) , I quote:

"While it is perfectly true that soil contains so many myriad micro- organisms it is virtually impossible to grasp just how many of them there are, it is also true that the vast majority are opportunistic in nature: that is, they display follow-the-leader tendencies which make them conform to the actions of the dominant strains in the group. In other words, it is the dominant group of micro-organisms in the soil which determine whether it becomes regenerative or degenerative. There is an on-going struggle for supremacy between the few most dominant strains, and the other millions of micro-organisms simply await the outcome and then adapt and go along with the characteristics of the victor."

We have to realize that not only those of us who constitute civil society but also most of those who constitute the dominant political, military, bureaucratic, corporate and religious establishments are living in a state of fear, indecision and doubt about their own survival. That is why they are intolerant of any trace of opinion, opposition or obstacle that stands in their way to

the acquisition and retention of power, position and authority which in turn enable them to enjoy social status and material things that satisfy their 'small egos.' They are the 'victors' and others 'adapt and go along with the characteristics of the victor.'

Aren't these situations of external glamour, power-wielding, amassing wealth (rightly or wrongly) and gratifying the five senses very temporary and transitory? Do we feel happy inwardly? We know very well that we are not only deceiving others but we are also deceiving ourselves very temporarily until the realization comes to us sooner or later that we should have spent our lives in greater inward and outward joy by choosing nobler objectives and right means to achieve those objectives? In this information age don't we read and hear about people ranging from heads of states to their close allies and kith and kin being reprimanded and even punished with rigorous imprisonment and death by those who take control after them?

What about the situation of humanity as a whole, the nature within which we have to enact this individualistic drama for survival and the physical environment which provides us with all the life support systems to live as micro - organisms, plants higher animal species and humans? One does not need a high education to realize the collective suicidal path we are taking. It is common sense. With this realization if properly harnessed, it is my conviction, that we still can reverse the negative degenerative trends on earth and human society and look up to a 21st century of Peace, Contentment and Happiness for All.

Let us turn to the leaders and the led of the times of Shrimati Lakshmi Menon. I am sure like all human beings they would have had their own short comings. But the vision they had, the mission for which they sacrificed their lives, the principles that guided them, the means they adopted to win their goals, helped them to overcome whatever weakness they had and the outcome was harnessing the goodness of all for the realization of Freedom and Welfare of All - SARVODAYA. India and so many other peoples of the world who were under the yoke of foreign imperialism achieved political independence following the example and leadership of Mahatma Gandhi and other leaders of India. They enacted their roles well and with great self-satisfaction left the

stage leaving room for the next generation to take the reins. The latter certainly achieved great things which please our "collective ego" as proud nations such as brushing shoulders as equals with our former rulers and even excelling in every skill in the fields of sport, beauty pageants, nuclear research, industrialization and even rapidly increasing rates of economic growth.

With all this have we nurtured a vision for individual and collective happiness? Have we got any where near the post-independent goals for which Mahatma Gandhi, Prime Minister Shri Jawaharlal Nehru, Acharya Vinoba Bhave, Shri Jayaprakash Narayan, Mrs Menon and so many other leaders made their sacrifices? If not it is timely at the turn of this century for us to genuinely look at the mistakes we did and carve out a vision,a mission, goals and objectives, and a regenerative process in our political, social and economic life drawing inspiration and guidance from our rich cultural history and values?

I look to the future with optimism. Politics intrinsically is not bad. Neither are those who take to politics. What is making politics such an evil exercise is the way we look at it and practise it. Politicians are becoming corrupt and take to violence and unethical conduct because of the system of power politics we have adopted. We have to look at politics as an art of good self-governance. As Gandhiji said on many occasions Swaraj should begin with oneself. Before you try to govern over others we should first govern ourselves. We should strive to bring under control the volitions and desires in our minds that arise as a response to sensory contacts and perceptions we get from outside. This self-control and self-discipline are necessary to win true freedom for oneself and also to share it with others.

The system of politics and political structures we have created today do not permit us to develop this self-control and discipline. It is too distant from us and we do not see our leaders in our life's daily dealings. We see them in posters pasted on walls making the whole environment ugly, or standing in giant size hardboard waving at us or smiling and looking down at us. Rarely we get opportunities to look at them in real life and blood, look eye to eye with them and exchange some kind, pleasant and useful words. There is no love exchanged between us and they are as much

alienated from us psychologically as well as physically as we are from them. This is the very unreal and artificial foundation on which present highly centralised political systems are based on. Only those people who get benefited from them, very often in an unethical or illegal way, therefore, become their go-betweens or political brokers. Therefore if we are to create a system of good governance we should give serious thought to Gandhiji's brilliant concept of village self-government. From this foundation extending not only to national levels but even to a world level a system of regional, provincial, national and world governance can be developed over a pre-determined period of of time. With the present advancement in the field of communication technology we can easily concretise this idea. Of course we need a political will to do this which enlightened public opinion should initiate.

There will be discontent always as long as the present economic system prevails, because one will never be content however much material things one has. Poverty will be on the increase as competition has overtaken co-operation. Insatiable greed in human beings will further pollute our environment and make this planet unliveable. We have to think about this also very seriously. As in politics a need-based or people-based alternative economy in which everybody can gainfully participate has to be worked out.

We should re-think about the validity or the feasibility of blindly following the western economic theory and practice. Perhaps a theory of full-engagement society will be a more feasible and realizable concept in our rural situations. Gandhiji talked about production by the masses rather than mass production. Dr. J.C. Kumarappa wrote about the Economy of Permanence. Lord Buddha included *Samma Ajiva* (Right Livelihood) in His Noble Eightfold Path. Dr. E.F. Schumacher introduced Buddhist Economics in his famous book "Small is Beautiful". Now the time has come to experiment with these ideas and concepts. These should be done with the full blessings and support of enlightened leaders and governments everywhere - in village communities, schools, universities, research institutions, religious bodies, voluntary agencies and so on. Every home and every neighbourhood should become a social laboratory and every individual should become a practical researcher to discover

alternative ways to awaken themselves, their families and communities. It will be like Gandhiji mobilizing a whole nation for a non-violent struggle to win freedom from the British Empire.

No one political party or religious, racial or other group can succeed in meeting today's challenges on its own. Our task is harder than that of Gandhiji and his contemporaries. We have to break all barriers that separate us and get together for the common good. This can happen only if we inculcate spiritual values into everything we do in life such as politics, business, medicine or even religion. The best point to start is the home and educational institutions. Meditation, Yoga and manual work should be part of our daily routine.

Like Dr. Higa's discovery of EM, which I mentioned earlier in my talk, to revitalize the earth neutralizing the myriads of lethal chemical poisons with which we have polluted it, the world today has an abundance of knowledge and harmless technologies and techniques at its disposal which we can use to build a peaceful and contented society without continuing on a path of greed, illwill and ignorance. Let us refuse to be a part of the problem creating process. Instead let us be a part of the problem solving process. Then we will be the dominant leadership and others will follow.

Thank You.

(From the second Lakshmi Menon Memorial International lecture delivered by Dr. A.T. Ariyaratne, President and Founder of the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement of Sri Lanka at PTC Towers Conference Hall, Trivandrum, India on 30th November 1996)

ACCEPTANCE SPEECH OF THE GANDHI PEACE PRIZE DELIVERED BY DR. A. T. ARIYARATNE, THE FOUNDER AND PRESIDENT OF THE SARVODAYA SHRAMADANA MOVEMENT OF SRI LANKA ON 1ST JANUARY 1997 AT RASHTRAPATHI BHAVAN, NEW DELHI

Your Excellency the President of India, Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma,

Your Excellency the Vice President of India, Dr. K.R.Narayanan,

The Honorable the Prime Minister of India, Shri H.D.Deve Gowda,

The Honorable the Chief Justice of India,

The Honorable the Leader of the Opposition, Shri A.B.Vajpayee,

The Honorable Ministers and Members of Parliament,

H.E. the High Commissioner for India in Sri Lanka,
Mr. Nareshwar Dayal,

H.E. the acting High Commissioner for Sri Lanka in India,

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I thank you for your presence here. I bring you greetings from many thousands of my rural sisters and brothers in the Sarvodaya Movement of Sri Lanka, who are striving to follow the path of Truth, Non-violence and Self-denial, as shown by great world teachers like the Buddha, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, Jesus Christ, Prophet Mohammed and Mahatma Gandhi. I bring you their greetings and blessings for peace in your minds, contentment in your hearts, good health and long life.

I thank very sincerely the Honorable Shri Deve Gowda, the Prime Minister of India and the members of the Jury for selecting me to receive the Gandhi Peace Prize for the year 1996. I also thank all those friends from many parts of the world who have nominated me for this prestigious Prize. This Prize means much more to me than all the previous international awards and prizes which I have received, because it is given in the name of Mahatma Gandhi - the father of the Indian Nation and Apostle of Peace and Non-violence - and because it is given by India, which we in Sri

Lanka have traditionally considered to be our own motherland. I accept this prize with all humility and with grateful thoughts towards all who helped me to awaken myself to the service of all beings.

I understand that when the Government of India instituted the Gandhi Peace Prize during Mahatma Gandhi's 125th Birth Anniversary Year, the Government wanted this to be the highest International Prize, India gives for those who contribute for Peace in the world. By selecting an exemplary world statesman, His Excellency Dr. Julius Nyerere, the much respected former President of Tanzania, as the first recipient of this Prize in 1995 and then a humble village-level worker like myself in 1996, the Jury has thrown open a challenging opportunity to encourage all those who strive to tread the Gandhian path of non-violence to peace and justice.

I do not consider this prize as a recognition given to me as an individual. It is more a reaffirmation of the conscience of mankind in whose innermost feelings and thoughts Truth, Non-violence and Service to fellow beings are very much cherished. While I am receiving the Gandhi Peace Prize truly it is I who owe a debt to Gandhi.

Mahatma Gandhi left no problem untouched in human society, even though most of his time was taken for the freedom struggle. In the Introduction to his Autobiography, he wrote "What I want to achieve, what I have been striving and pining to achieve these thirty years, is self-realization,: to see God face to face, to attain Moksha." Everything he spoke, did, and experimented with in his life from the spirituo-moral and cultural to the socio-economic and political field was directed towards this end of Self-realization or what we in the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement of Sri Lanka call Total Personality Awakening.

The Gandhi Peace Prize that India conferred on a Sri Lankan today is a continuation and reaffirment of millennia old affinity between our two countries, its peoples and cultures whose value systems originated from the same spiritual source. Therefore, my acceptance of this award is a life-long moral commitment on my part to strengthen further our bonds based on those common

values for the greater good of our peoples and the global human community in general. I am reminded of the words of Sir D.B.Jayatillake, patriot, eminent scholar, people's leader and later the first High Commissioner for Sri Lanka in India, at the conclusion of Mahatma Gandhi's tour to Sri Lanka in November 1927. He said "The triumph of his tour was nothing but Ceylon's homage to the ideals of Truth, Non-violence and Self-sacrifice."

The real tribute we can pay to Gandhiji is to live and sacrifice ourselves for these ideals as he himself did. Outside of these ideals there is no future for our countries or for the human society in general.

India's Contribution

Gandhiji visited Sri Lanka long before I was born. Our parents and elders vividly remembered his visit. He presided over the Prize Giving at Mahinda College, Galle, where I studied, and addressed the students at Nalanda College, Colombo, where I taught. Gandhiji in his 1927 tour covered the length and breadth of Sri Lanka from the deep South to the Central Hills and the North. Everywhere he went thousands of people of all communities and religious beliefs welcomed him, and warmly responded to his call to buy khadi and liberally donate to alleviate the sufferings of the poor in India at that time.

Though he repeatedly said that he came to Sri Lanka as 'a self-appointed representative of the dumb and starving millions of India - on behalf of Daridranarayan' in his speeches he spared no pains to implore all to work hard towards a spiritual revival, preserve cultures, cultivate simple life styles and live in harmony with one another and nature. Gandhiji had clearly expressed his thoughts at those receptions and meetings on most problems that our countries faced such as Indo-Sri Lanka relations, education, health and labour and envisaged a guideline for the future development of our countries.

We owe a debt of gratitude to Shri Mahadev Desai who wrote and published the book "With Gandhiji in Ceylon - A Journal of the Tour with authorized version of all important Speeches." On the cover page there is a quote by Gandhi: 'Forge the Link

Stronger - Gandhi' If only the leaders of both our countries who espoused the causes of various racial, religious or communal groups studied and paid heed to Gandhiji's words as recorded in this small book not only could we have changed the course of our sad recent history but we could also have progressed in all aspects of cultured life. We need not have witnessed the past distrusts, deep divisions, conflicts, bloodshed, terrorism, and uncertainties.

With the excellent relations which exist between our two countries now, we can 'Forge the Link Stronger' not only using millenia-old spirituo-cultural roots but also using the communication technology that is at our disposal today, so that together with other countries in this part of the world, we are not only the economic force we are expected to be but we are also a spiritual force for sustainable life on earth.

My generation of youngsters knew very little about Gandhiji's teachings as that was not a part of our curriculum of studies. My interest in Gandhiji was kindled quite accidentally on February 1st 1948 when I saw a crowd of people in my village peeping into a local newspaper and crying aloud as if a great personal or national calamity had occurred. This scenario was sparked off by the banner headline news that Gandhiji had been assassinated. I too joined the crowd in its mourning.

This unforgettable experience as a mid-teenager made a lasting impact on my life and I started reading whatever material I could find written by him or about him. My Buddhist upbringing, unsophis-ticated and community-service-minded parents and the village community, and perhaps even a karmic habit from past lives of identifying with and helping the poor, would have drawn me emotionally to the Gandhian fold at that young age.

While attending the high school, then the teachers' training college, and the university, I devoted myself not only to study and pass my examinations well but also to serve my village community, and then see and learn for myself the conditions under which the poorest, the powerless and the most neglected communities of my country lived in the backwoods of Sri Lanka. I remember with gratitude the guidance I received from an elderly

friend who was familiar with what the government then called the backward communities. I must admit that while my heart was with these people at that time, I could not conceive of any non-violent way that the injustices they were subjected to could be rectified. Violent revolutionary methods seemed to be more promising to my youthful mind the more I read about the revolutionary changes that were reported to be taking place in the former Soviet Union, People's Republic of China, Eastern Europe and others. I continued with my community service activities but I had no clear vision at that time which would guide me into the future.

In December 1957 I made my first trip to India. I travelled from Kanya Kumari to Sri Nagar and from Bombay to Calcutta. I made a second trip in December 1959 in the company of a fellow teacher Dharma Gunasinghe, who is still working with me, to Delhi, and was very fortunate to have had the opportunity of not only listening to but personally talking with several founding fathers of modern India including the Prime Minister Shri Jawaharlal Nehru, President Dr. Rajendra Prasad, and Vice-President Shri S. Radhakrishnan.

During the course of this trip I attended the International Conference of the New World Education Fellowship which was addressed by eminent Indian scholars. In a lucid exposition of Gandhiji's concept of post-independent Indian society, the famous educationist Dr. M.G. Ramachandran, used the word SARVODAYA, which immediately awakened in me the ideal for which I should live and dedicate my life.

Next I found my way to Acharya Vinoba Bhave who was on his Bhoodan Padayatra (Land Gift Mission) in Punjab, and I walked with him for a couple of days. Having received his blessings, advice, and inspiration I returned to Sri Lanka with the firm determination of experimenting with a non-violent method to total social transformation. The Principal, the teachers, and students of Nalanda College, Colombo, were the first to join with me in this almost unachievable task.

All High Commissioners for India in Sri Lanka from Shri V.V. Giri, who later became the President of India, to the present incumbent Shri Nareshwar Dayal, several successive Presidents

and Prime Ministers of India, Governors of States and many other leaders gave me their encouragement and blessings from time to time whenever I visited India. Shri E.W.Ariyanayakam and Shrimati Ashadevi Ariyanayakam, Shri Jayaprakash Narayan and Shrimati Prabhawati Narayan, Dr. R.R. Divakar and several other Gandhian leaders visited us several times and gave us all encouragement during the formative years of the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement of Sri Lanka. On this occasion I gratefully remember them though they are no longer with us.

Sarvodaya Society

Today, on the 1st January 1997, India begins her 50th Anniversary Year of independence. In a year from now Sri Lanka too would have completed fifty years of political independence. In another three years time all of us will see the dawn of the third millennium. So I am sure that you will agree with me that this is an appropriate time for all of us to dispassionately look in retrospect and reappraise by ourselves our successes and failures as independent and interdependent nations, closely allied peoples and related cultures.

Have the succeeding generations, institutions of governance, social and economic systems, delivered the goods which were expected of them by our forefathers who sacrificed so much to liberate us from cultural, economic and political subjugation ? If not what corrective measures should we take now ? I leave these questions to be seriously considered by the leaders of our two countries by turning the searchlight into themselves and into the institutions they compete to control. Gandhiji always looked relentlessly for the Truth regardless of what pain it cost, so too should we be brave emulating his spirit and do the same. I have a feeling that we would be able to find an answer by developing insights with the help of Gandhiji's thoughts.

Honorable the Prime Minister, in your Excellency's letter informing me that I had been selected to receive the Gandhi Peace Prize for 1996 an emphasis was made on certain criteria that qualified me to be selected to receive this Prize. Some of these criteria were: (1) Promoting Gandhian Values around the world, (2) Attempting to bring about social, economic and political

transformation through non-violence, (3) Applying Gandhiji's teachings to solve apparently unresolvable problems around the world, (4) Working selflessly for peace and non-violence, and (5) Amelioration of human suffering particularly of the less privileged sections of society, thereby contributing towards social justice and peace. This is, indeed, a summation of what my colleagues and I have been attempting to do for nearly the last four decades. Therefore, I consider it my duty on this auspicious occasion, even very briefly, to describe the ideological, institutional, and practical programmes and processes, which we are releasing for the betterment of our human society.

I believe that globalization of the commodity markets alone, as is taking place today at an increasing pace, does not bring humanity closer to peace and justice. On the contrary it may result in fiercer competitiveness which will lead to more violence and injustices. More certainly will a global transformation of human consciousness, as Lord Buddha and Mahatma Gandhi conceived, serve to bring humanity closer to peace and justice. But Gandhiji was also aware of structural violence, which is now oppressing the masses of poor people around the world. It is this structural violence that we must tackle non-violently. Metta or Loving Kindness towards all sentient beings is at the core of spiritual consciousness which can transform global human relationships so that they are based on non-violence in thought, word, and deed.

What does this mean? Every human being whatever his vocation should be reminded of the need to have a spiritual ideal for self-realization. Self-realization is supreme happiness whatever terminology we may use to describe it. Once we set about steadfastly treading the path to self-realization, like the Noble Eight-fold Path shown by the Buddha, we begin to experience the joy of living whatever sufferings and difficulties we have to bear in following such a path. There can be no spiritual ideal if it lacks loving kindness towards all and non-violence in one's thought, word and deed. The ideal society such individuals would conceive of , therefore, will be a society where the Well-being of All is assured and plenty of scope is provided for the Personality Awakening of All. Gandhiji named such a society as a Sarvodaya Society. What I have dedicated my life for is to build a Sarvodaya Society in my country and the world.

Sarvodaya for the individual is Total Personality Awakening or Purna Paurushodaya. Sarvodaya for the family is Total Family Awakening or Kutumbodaya. Sarvodaya for the village is Total Village Awakening / Village Self-government or Gramodaya/Grama Swarajya. Sarvodaya for the urban communities is Nagarodaya/ Nagaraswarajya. Sarvodaya for the national community is Deshodaya. Sarvodaya for the World Commuity is Vishvodaya. Our objective is to release non-violent constructive processes that lead to development, peace and justice at all these six levels.

How did we set about to do this? We went among the most underprivileged communities and we requested them to co-operate with us to awaken our personalities by allowing us to live with them for a few days to share our thoughts, efforts, skills and whatever other resources we would bring with us. We had them select and discuss a useful task to be performed with them, which would satisfy a felt-need of the community. Together we planned the exercise in such a way that everyone felt that he or she is engaged in the noblest task that any human being can conceive of: building a truly human society even for a few days where nothing but the best in them manifested itself. Volunteers from outside, and men, women, and children from the village would all live together, wake up together, meditate together, cook and eat together, work together, sing and dance together, and learn from one another without being formally taught.

There is something more than road building, construction of irrigation tanks and canals happening in these camps, something more than even what is now called human resource development. A continuing process of human personality awakening is released in this initial activity in the village. We call this activity spiritual and psychological infra-structure building.

In human society at all levels four inter-related vicious processes operate; the Buddha named them as psychological alienation (Chanda), aversion (Dwesha), fear (Bhaya) and delusion (Moha). The underlying factors for such alienation may be caste, religious, racial, linguistic, political, class, color, or other divisions. In a Sarvodaya Shramadana camp, on the other hand, these divisive factors do not surface themselves. Instead, respect

for life, tolerance of all cultural and other differences, compassionate service, and the joy one gets out of such selfless service and equanimity prevail. Sharing, pleasant language, constructive activities and equality in association supplement these processes. An entirely different kind of psychological security and mutuality founded on spiritual awakening emerges in the participant-beneficiaries. A natural process of internalisation of human duties and rights into our personalities takes place.

From the inception of the movement to this day, such camps are held in all parts of the country. Thousands of people have participated from our country and hundreds of people from around the world in these camps. Quite apart from the material benefits village communities get from this activity, which of course is the only aspect that the economists notice, is the revolutionary significance of this activity in the social transformation process. This is what we wish to emphasize. Any economic program can temporarily boost the financial gains of impoverished people, but only through self empowerment do the financial gains bring about a long term positive effect. As an example we have recently initiated a new program: the Sarvodaya Development Banks, which are being established in the advanced villages with people's own savings, and under their own trained managers, most of whom are young women. They are also provided with appropriate technical know how and knowledge about how markets work in the existing national and international system.

Man-made differences fall into insignificance and disappear in the psychology of people when this kind of integrated development processes occupy their minds and begin to show concrete results. They are drawn closer to the ideal of One World One People. Beside the explained positive effects, a great number of local and international movements have flowered from this work. For example, a group of Japanese came to Sarvodaya, and participated in Shramadana. They returned to their country to found the 'One World One People Society' and work in co-operation with us. There are others who created similar movements in Japan, Korea, Bangladesh, Nepal and Tamil Nadu from the Sri Lankan experience.. In the same way a group in San Diego, in the United States formed what they called The Beloved Community. Others in the United States, Belgium, Netherlands,

Germany, and elsewhere accepted the word, "Sarvodaya" itself for their societies. Then there are other movements with similar ideals around the world. They all add to the formation of a critical mass of spiritual and psychological consciousness at the global level by promoting the Sarvodaya ideas and practices in their own environments.

A Sarvodaya village community enters the second phase of its awakening by the formation of various groups, such as pre-school children, children of school going age, youths, mothers, farmers, craftsmen and so on. These groups try to relate themselves to basic human needs, namely: the need for a healthy environment, clean drinking water, nutrition, health, housing, communications, energy requirements, education, and cultural and spiritual needs.

They have developed a portfolio of activities which they can carry out with self-reliance, community participation and grassroots planning. Going through evolutionary stages, and training their functional leaders in Sarvodaya Development Educational Institutions spread throughout the country, these communities organize themselves into village-level societies which give them an institutional framework managed by their own elected executive committees like Panchayats in India.

Over the last four decades our movement has succeeded in helping 11,300 villages out of an estimated 25,000 villages in the country to organize themselves into village societies. Those societies that have reached what we call fourth and fifth stages of village awakening are classified as Pioneering villages, and each of them give leadership and guidance to four Intermediate villages and five Peripheral villages to reach higher and higher levels of participatory development. Thus ten villages are working together as a cluster.

We believe that when the thousand clusters in which we already work progress successfully and gather sufficient momentum that would greatly facilitate the launching of alternative political and economic processes nationwide by the government as well as by civic organisations.

In addition to spiritual, moral, and cultural awakening, very

clearly worked out and proven social, technological and economic empowerment programs are carried out in these villages. This kind of bottom-up and lateral awakening of villages is what Gandhiji believed could expand globally in 'oceanic circles'. Nobody in the village is left out in such processes which are also capable of global expansion.

The physically and mentally handicapped, malnourished and orphaned, socially discriminated and oppressed, displaced and refugees, (for whatever man-made or natural reason they fell into that category,) along with normal villagers can find ways of becoming participant- beneficiaries in this alternative approach to development.

Peacemaking from Below

As the Gandhi Peace Prize winner a few comments from me on the conflict situation in Sri Lanka may be in order. We all know that the government forces and the rebel forces of the LTTE have been engaged in a bloody and costly war for well over a decade. At another level there is also a search for a negotiated political settlement to the conflict that is taking place with both high level governmental and international initiatives for peace. The entire thinking is limited to a 'political solution' and a 'military initiative'. It appears that beyond considering the 'political solution' and supporting the 'military initiative', people and peoples' movements like Sarvodaya have apparently no role to play.

Unlike in the past where conflicts were between sovereign states and where the heads of states could negotiate as persons of equal status with one another, the present conflicts are mostly within national boundaries between unequals, whether in Sri Lanka or Chechnya. These wars are conducted in jungles and the mountains with rebel groups whose strength lies in their tactics of guerilla warfare and in the alienation of the conflict-affected populations. In such situations the model of state-to-state diplomacy conducted formally in the capitals of states, with high public visibility and with little flexibility, loses much of its relevance to resolving the problem. In addition, the pyramidal forms of top-down political and economic structures which

different high level groups try to monopolise, lead to a whipping up of ethnic and other differences among the communities.

The people with whom the Sarvodaya Movement has been working with for nearly four decades are those at the community or grassroots level. They are the biggest losers from war and conflict, both in terms of lost economic opportunities and in lives sacrificed in the war effort. At the three most recent elections held in the country the people voted in large majorities for political parties with a peace platform. But the reality is that the people are without the power to convert their desires into reality.

What Sarvodaya is attempting to do is to increase the space available for the people to participate in a lasting peace process without peacemaking remaining a monopoly of a few privileged groups circumscribed by their limited concept of peace. However, the financial, logistical, legal and other material support is hardly adequate for people's movements compared to the resources available for the other two processes of war and high level negotiations. Despite these drawbacks Sarvodaya is engaged in a programme of mobilisation of the religious, business and educational sectors. It is our belief that middle range leaders, with their networks both upwards and downwards, can play a crucial people-based role in promoting and re-invigorating the peace process. Of course, our contribution can be more effective and bring tangible results if our role is recognised as valuable by the conflicting parties. But regardless of recognition and support, we continue ceaselessly with our peace building work.

After more than 13 years of war and several breakdowns in the peace process, it is clear that significant mistrust exists between the Sri Lankan government and the LTTE. It is in the context of the acute mistrust and breakdown of communication between the two conflicting parties that the Sarvodaya Movement has taken its people-based approach to conflict resolution. We recognise that the resolution of our war cannot be left to either the politicians or to the military commanders alone. Making peace calls for a realistic assessment of ground realities. Increasing the awareness of people at the grassroots and generating in them a sympathetic feeling for the sufferings of others is one part of changing those ground realities.

With its presence in nearly half of Sri Lanka's village communities, Sarvodaya has taken the initiative in promoting Sinhala-Tamil-Muslim village exchange programmes, whereby youth from the different communities engage in constructive activities for long periods as honorary members of other villages. Multi-ethnic and multi-religious peace marches and peace meditations in which hundreds of thousands of people have participated, conflict resolution training for Buddhist clergy and Tamil and Muslim community leaders, and joining in the peace activities of other organisations are some of the other ways in which Sarvodaya has tried to promote people-based peacemaking.

Events in Sri Lanka and elsewhere indicate that our world is faced with numerous problems ranging from abject poverty, terminal diseases, ethnic conflicts, sex-crimes inflicted on children and women, and drug addiction to global environmental pollution, political violence, civil wars, terrorism and large-scale corruption. All these evils are inter-related and they are caused by equally inter-related factors. Our existing national and international systems of governance, economic development and peace making seem to have lost their grip in dealing with these evils. Therefore most of the people who control or try to control these systems are incapable of dealing with them effectively. Very few realize that it is not their fault but arises from the inherent nature of the outdated systems of party and power politics and related economic and bureaucratic instruments. This has left them in the pathetic situation of looking after their existing vested interests, attacking one another, and making feeble and superficial gestures at solving problems. It is nothing more than pulling, pushing and fighting for the most comfortable seats in a ship knowing very well that the ship has a big hole and is fast sinking with all of them on board.

We may take courage from what Gandhiji wrote to Shri Nehru more than a half century ago.

> *"I must not fear if the world today is going the wrong way. It may be that India too will go that way and like the proverbial moth burn itself eventually in the flame around which it dances more and more furiously. But it is my bounden duty up to my last breath to try to protect India and through India the entire world from such a doom. The*

essence of what I have said is that man should rest content with what are his real needs and become self-sufficient. If he does not have this control he cannot save himself. After all the world is made up of individuals just as it is the drops that constitute the ocean."

The earth ship is in serious danger. Gandhiji showed a way to seal the hole and save the ship. We in Sarvodaya are applying his prescription with modifications to suit the changing times and climes. The Gandhi Peace Prize is such a great encouragement to us we will now work harder and faster. Please give us your continued support not only for the work we are now doing in Sri Lanka and in many other countries as well but also to unfold a Global Vision which would be Asia's contribution to the 21st Century.

GANDHIAN THOUGHTS
IN
THE EDUCATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

I am honoured to have been invited to deliver the Convocation Address at your esteemed educational institution with which the sacred name and vision of Mahatma Gandhi is very closely associated. I recollect the inspiration and motivation I received by listening to Dr. G.Ramachandran in New Delhi in 1959 and then again in 1994 just before he passed away when I met him at his residence in Neyyattinkara town near Trivandrum where we had a long discussion. I pay my homage to his memory and to that of his dear wife late Dr. Soundaram Ramachandran for their lasting contribution to education by founding and establishing the Gandhi Gram Rural Institute. I thank Prof. T.R.Natesan, the Vice-Chancellor, for inviting me for this auspicious occasion.

First of all I like to congratulate all the students of this (deemed) university who are receiving their degrees today having worked hard for a number of years. I have no doubt that most of you have decided what you are going to do after your graduation. I wish you the very best in your chosen careers.

Among the multifarious experiments with which Gandhiji was occupied all his life those in education were placed at the highest level of importance. The Phoenix settlement Gandhiji founded in Natal in 1904 and the Tolstoy Farm just outside Johannesburg in 1910 were his initial experiments in education. Subsequently after he returned to India from 1915 to 1930 his laboratory for his experiments in education was the Satyagraha Ashram on the banks of the Sabarmati river. Then followed the Wardha, the Gujerat Vidyapeeth and others. It is my belief that Gandhigram Rural Institute is a continuation of Gandhiji concepts and experiments in education.

Learning and Education

Learning is a process that is continuously taking place in all

living beings. Learning in human beings surpasses that of all others because of their advanced brain or the thinking apparatus. The impact that the kind of learning of one human being can make on all other human beings, all living beings and nature is such that it can bring about positive benefits or disastrous consequences. This is why from the beginnings of civilized life great thinkers, statesmen, teachers and social reformers paid a very high attention to education. Education in essence is the over-all manner in which the learning processes are guided in directions that a society at a particular time thinks most appropriate for the good of that society. The values, the objectives, the institutions, the contents and methodologies of education, therefore, can undergo changes from time to time according to the dominant decision makers of that particular society.

When Gandhiji returned to India the kind of education that was imposed on the people of India at that time by the colonial powers was such that he had no alternative but to experiment and design an educational system that fitted the national ethos and served the cause of Swaraj - a Free India, and a Sarvodaya Society. According to my understanding he believed that these two objectives could be achieved by integrating into the educational process the following ingredients : A vision of Freedom, Truth and Non-violence; Equal Respect and Opportunities for all citizens and peoples irrespective of their religious, racial, linguistic, gender and other differences; Equal importance to socially useful and productive intellectual as well as Manual work; Mother Tongue to be the medium of instruction at all levels with compulsory teaching of Hindi; the content of teaching curricula and other arrangements to be aimed at Serving the Needs of the village population which comprised the majority of people of India.

Gandhiji's experiments were carried out during the pre-independence period. We have now reached the fiftieth year after independence. So this is an appropriate time for us to assess the successes and failures in education during the post-Gandhian Era and arrive at a consensus on the future directions in education that will guide us to the twenty first century. Our vision for the future need not be conditioned by our national interests alone. It should extend to the human society as a whole. Human problems have

taken a global proportion and therefore the solutions we look for also should have a global perspective.

From Complexity to Simplicity

We are living in a very complex world. Sometimes I believe that these complexities have unnecessarily complicated our lives. When we cannot overcome and control these complications we get so confused that we lose track of the essence of our human life. We look for a consumerist life style which is the most dominant and advertised way to live in modern society. We get caught in this glamour and insatiable desires and get totally lost. Still for all we forget the fact that most of us are simple people. Our problems, therefore, are simple problems. Simple problems need simple solutions. Mahatma Gandhi was a symbol of simplicity

When I refer to simplicity as a concept that I value in the great Mahatma you would wonder what this idea has got to do with higher education. Gandhiji valued simplicity because it brought him nearer to the truth. He practised it by wearing a simple dress and eating simple food and associating with simple people. This simplicity enabled him to think deeply. Very few people realise how deep into life you delve when you are small and simple.

The Buddha called simplicity a way of life. When you are free and simple you do have few things to hold on to. This holding, this grasping - Tanha is the cause of all our suffering. You minimise its impact by being simple, and your inner life becomes tranquil. For higher education there is nothing so gainful as a simple way of living. I am reminded of Timon of Athens in a Shakespearean play, who found a satisfying life by being a simple man in a solitary place. As the ruler of Athens, he could not find that happiness.

In this age where conspicuous consumption is the admired pattern of life, even in many seats of higher learning, simplicity as a way of life has lost its influence. Mahatma taught it to us not only by advocating it, but also by practising simplicity in his day-to-day life. His life was dedicated to simplicity.

When you are simple in your life philosophy, the language you use is pleasant. You do not intend to harm others in your talk. Simplicity enables you and motivates you to share whatever you have with others who are in need. If it tends to go against your welfare or that of the others, you do not do it. With a simple philosophy of life there is no difference between you and other human beings. Simplicity as a philosophy is what Mahatma Gandhi practised. It is the essence that you can learn from higher education.

The Great Wonder

The Buddha speaks of three wonders. The wonder of the mystic, the wonder of manifestation and the most important of all, is the wonder of education. The first two are often feared or abhorred. It means complete change in you giving your strength to lessen your grasp on things and be of service to yourself and others.

You are all fortunate in having that great wonder for your benefit. This education in a seat of learning as the Gandhi Gram Rural Institute should accomplish that wonder of changing you completely after this transformation. You should be different people from what you were when you entered the portals of this Institute. In this change, as Gandhiji said, often reiterated the cultivation of love for humanity and even going beyond that love for all living beings is the first step in your great transformation.

This love should flow on the world from the innermost recesses of your heart - it should be like the love a mother possesses towards her only child. Could you achieve this ideal by the process of your higher education?. Nearer you are to the ideal closer you are to your own God, Brahma, Ram, Nirvana or truth.

When he proclaimed Ahimsa or non-violence and urged all of us not to think of violence, the basis in all this was love for all beings. The Buddha, another great son of your country respected by us very much in Sri Lanka, spoke of extending your love to all living beings. Today, they speak of human rights in the west. But they forget that Buddha, Gandhiji and other great Indians went

beyond that, for them higher learning is transformation of your inner being immersed in a love that embraces not only human beings, but also animals.

The great King Asoka in your country extended protection to animals, birds and fish, and even established hospitals for animals in addition to those established for human beings. Human beings, as well as animals could live anywhere in the country without fear.

Compassion at the Heart of Education

The Ahimsa philosophy of Gandhiji results in developing compassion for all beings, then your actions are dictated by this compassion. Your heart becomes nobler and what you learn, makes you realise the provision of services to all that the provision of services of all without injuring any living being as far as practically possible is your goal. If this was practised in higher education and research, man would not have discovered devastating weapons that cripple and kill themselves. In 1945, the atom bomb dropped on Hiroshima killed nearly 200,000 people. This was a bomb which had a destructive force of 12.5 kilotons. They say today they have bombs which have more than 200 kilotons of power.

Is education or knowledge dedicated to destroy man? You should question the meaning of your life here. In the Indian system, you spend the time you learn with your teachers. The knowledge you gain is coupled with character formation. I believe that wisdom which is the real essence of education comes from binding knowledge with virtues. Education or higher education without virtue, a spiritual content in it, is meaningless. If we had a system where wisdom was given instead of mere knowledge, our scientists would not have come out with such devastating weapons to create so much of misery and unhappiness in life. Higher education needs to be grounded on virtue. That means, you should widen the horizons of knowledge by widening the noble qualities of your heart at the same time. This qualitative assessment of education was which that great Gandhiji too valued.

Higher education should help us not only to bring out great scientists, a great philosophy, or great professionals, but also to create great men and women in all of us. They should be able to use their wisdom and make life better and happier for all of us. The concern for others must serve as the basis of higher education. When Gandhiji talked of serving God, in another way he was speaking of serving all of us - God's children. The higher education that you imbibe today should motivate you to serve all human beings.

It is the absence of this spirit of service that had made most of us selfish and has turned us towards corruption. In every aspect of life, whether in our country or outside, in politics, in international dealings, in economics; corruption has set in. This is due to a faulty system of education which had inculcated a wrong value system in us. Instead of being simple and sharing our resources with others, we plan to live ostentatious lives imitating others usurping other peoples resources to create great disparity in the rich and the poor. This is mainly due to this way of living practiced by us.

Training for a vocation, learning skills profitable in securing a job is not the aim of education. Unfortunately in today's world of intensive competition such is the deceptive view of many. It is not difficult to bring out men and women with certain skills but to bring out individuals with developed personalities is not easy. Institutions devoted to higher education attempt to transform your exterior being. In the flower of your youth you gained admission here and rich in experience and wisdom you march out as a totally transformed human being.

I may be asked a simple question here. Why do I advocate education and change now, for the better, when all over the world, education is used in order to increase wealth. You learn to acquire wealth, you become a doctor undergoing great hardships and you try to earn all what you have spent and much more when you practise your profession. You thus become a businessman and strive to make money and nothing more. You become a politician and engage in corruption to earn wealth. You use your powerful

position to gratify your senses. Is all this wrong? If so, why ?

Such activities are morally wrong because you are in principle, utilising resources which should go to other people without any resources. Thereby you widen the disparity between the haves and have-nots. This would lead to a great devastation in the future, leading to your own downfall. You have acquired wisdom, the spiritual power that enables you to face life confidently. When you become selfish and attempt to increase your wealth, you create grave social problems—crime, poverty, etc. that would ultimately be for your own undoing. You create a monster who ultimately ends up by devouring you.

Higher education or education that you receive here is not a commodity to be marketed. It is a distinctive mark of the change in your personality to say that you have acquired wisdom. In this Institution you have studied a variety of subjects and acquired knowledge. At the same time, by coming into contact with your teachers, by reading books and through experience you have transformed your personality and acquired a spiritual power which Gandhiji would be proud of. It is this spiritual power that renders the knowledge you gained, into wisdom. In whatever field you work in the future, as long as this power prevails, you would never become a selfish, unsacrificing, bigotted human being.

Just imagine what tolerance education could give you. You learn about different religions, philosophies, sciences etc. By inner concentration, you understand how each of those ideologies are correct in some way and wrong in another. In order to get the correct understanding, you should view all of these with compassion and sympathy. Your higher education should give you a heart great enough to see all these ideologies with understanding and sympathy. It is then that you are ready to learn the meaning of the term Tolerance. Tolerance is not being apathetic, but an active state of the mind where you understand others with sympathy and love.

Sharpen your character with PATIENCE

Tolerance teaches you to be patient even with ignorance. Ignorance ignites pride, prejudice and leads to hatred. Patience

inspires humility and deepens understanding. Your heart narrows with ignorance ; but widens with patience. This is why it is said: Learn to be patient and you have gained the fruits of your education. The world needs such tolerance to transform this habitat we live in to a happy place. Oneness of the world could be achieved through patience. It is then that in families, in communities, in the world society .we could establish tolerance.

For me, the meaning of higher education is not complete if I do not speak about what it could do to your own life. Very soon you will realise; particularly the young people who enter the world after completing your Degrees, that the world is full of problems. You would not be able to find solutions to most of your problems. Your education would help you cultivate a strong and understanding frame of mind to face such problems, for you realise that such problems are not peculiar to you. You will learn to be patient and understand problems.

Patience is the key word here. In this long journey you all have to go, starting from today. I wish to give you a present carved in bold letters - PATIENCE - which `is a weapon which the great Mahatma used in his non-violent struggles against injustices and imperialism throughout his life. Patience strengthened his character and gave him time to understand others. Even in religion patience is extolled, and I am sure one's guardian deities, as well as the natural law of the world will be on the side of the persons who utilise patience.

You may be wondering why I spent so much of the time given to me to stress the importance of your personality awakening. After all the challenges we have to face today are of an unprecedented nature and proportions. Unless we have very strong personalities and develop deep insights we cannot even grasp the inter-related nature of the problems and their enormity. As I mentioned at the beginning of this lecture we can easily get confused, lost and disheartened. Then we will have no alternative but to conform and coalesce with the dominant forces that are driving us in a violent, untruthful and selfish direction at the end of which the entire human species will perish.

On the contrary with a clear vision, moral character and

patience we can work towards the alternative society that Gandhiji visualised, and named as Sarvodaya. In Sri Lanka I am one of those among thousands of Sarvodaya workers who believe that this could be done if we are prepared to make the sacrifices and suffer willingly for that cause. We should remember that education is for life. It is a process that takes place through life and throughout life. Please go to our sisters and brothers in the villages and share your knowledge and awaken the wisdom in them. Help build self-reliance in them and make community participation for self-development and village self-government an attainable reality for them.

May all of you prosper and may your future be full of happiness in time to come.

May the torch of light you carry from this Institution light your life, and that of everyone else in the world!

May all living beings happy!!

From the Convocation Address delivered by Dr.A.T.Ariyaratne, President of the Sarvodaya Movement in Sri Lanka, at the XVIIth Convocation Ceremony of Gandhi Gram Rural Institute, India on 5th February 1997.

APPLICATION OF TRADITIONAL BUDDHIST IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

Synopsis

The teachings of the Buddha transcends time and space. Any diligent human being who wants to practice what He taught can do so in his or her everday life. A group of persons who want to try out his teachings in contemporay society pertaining to family, group or community well-being too can do so and come to their own conclusions about their usefulness or ineffectiveness. Buddha gave that freedom to us. His teachings elevated us, the human beings, to a supreme level where the shaping of our destiny is not determined by the intervention of any other outside divine power but we have to work it out ourselves. He admonished his disciples to work for their own liberation. He was only a Teacher who discovered and showed the Path to Nibbana- the lasting and unconditioned happiness all Buddhists aspire for.

The Buddha's teaching, the Dhamma, is the seed. It can germinate and grow to fruition in a human mind, in a human personality, resulting in total liberation of such human being from the sufferings in the cycle of births and deaths-samsara. Some individuals thought out and worked at societal level to develop certain cultural, social, economic and political infrastructures which would be conducive to germinate this seed not only in individual minds but also in the collective consciousness of the community. In Buddhist tradition and history there are many such successful attempts which were made and which are on record. The Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement of Sri Lanka is an example from contemporary society of such an attempt.

In this paper I am trying to make an attempt to trace the core teachings of the Buddha as applicable to the spiritual awakening of the practitioner living in society and simultaneously creating an enabling and a conducive environment to acquire self realisation he or she is seeking. Some scholars have called this engaged

Buddhism. In contemporary society I have taken the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement of Sri Lanka with which I am closely associated as an illustration. The application of the social dimensions of the Buddha's teachings in all aspects of social organisation, including political and economic life and the vistas open to extend this endeavour to address all problems humanity is faced with, are briefly dealt with in this paper.

APPLICATION OF TRADITIONAL BUDDHIST THOUGHTS IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY - AN EXPERIENCE FROM SRI LANKA

In our traditional society, the most important aspect of Buddhist teachings that inspired us was the fact that one's salvation entirely depends on oneself. No god or any other super-human could help us. This idea of self-reliance and self-help was the basis of the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement of Sri Lanka. We must help ourselves without waiting for outside help.

Buddhist teachings learned by us places man above even god[1]. This emphasis on human beings as the most valuable, particularly when the human being is endowed with qualities such as compassion towards everyone is central to our development philosophy. Such a philosophy centred on human beings would assist our journey to this earthly pure land.

Although the emphasis is on human beings, Buddhist teachings did not forget all types of living beings. We do not thus need to speak of human rights, but the rights of all living beings. The duties that every human being has to perform towards other human beings and the rest of living beings are equally or more important from a Buddhist point of view. It is because of this that Buddhist kings of the past, such as the Great Asoka of India attempted to make life safe and free to all living beings. In our journey to a "Pure Land" of Buddhism we cannot forget our dumb friends and the environment.

In traditional society, the environment was respected. Before you cut a tree, you should plant one first. Otherwise it was

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[1] Sakka Panha Sutta

considered a great offence. Polluting of one's environment was again a serious offence. In the "Pure Land" there would be a close affinity between beings and the environment[2]. The emphasis on a congenial environment (pati rupa desa vasoca) is made in order to indicate this pollution-free environment[3].

In Sarvodaya activities we pay much attention to personality awakening. In the great king Asoka of India, known as Dharmasoka, this interest in the environment is seen in the edicts he established all over India. The Seventh Pillar Edict states how he got trees planted in order to give shade to animals and men. Several varieties of animals were protected and finally, all killings of animals were brought to an end. The role of the environment in human development was identified.

Total liberation cannot be achieved without such development. In order to gain this, traditional Buddhism has taught us four ways of action in society and four ways of the mind.

In society, involving ourselves in social action, we should practice sharing resources, utilising pleasant language, working for one's benefit as well as that of others, and do all this motivated by equality. No difference as to race, creed, colour etc. comes into play here. Social interaction follows these four principles.

This is followed by a psychological process. Here the first step is compassion. In this your heart is full of positive thoughts towards others. The ideal is stated as the love of a mother to her only son. This compassion is followed by compassionate

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2 Diga Nikaya-II 263-289. The pali commentary:
Sumangala Vilasini (commentary of the Diga Nikaya states that no trees should be felled in the vicinity of monasteries. Hunting and hurting animals in the monastery surroundings and fishing too was not allowed in the lakes and rivers nearby.

3 In the great king Asoka of India, known as Dharmasoka, this interest in the environment is seen in the edicts. The Seventh Pillar Edict states how he got trees planted in order to give shade to animals and men. Several varieties of animals were protected and finally, all killings of animals were brought to an end. The role of the environment in human development was identified.

action, and that by altruistic joy, and finally total equaniity. These four states are described as the four states of sublime beings (brahmas). We could take them as guiding principles for personality development of the pure land inhabitants. The quality of a human society primarily depends on the quality of human beings of whom that society is composed of.

One of the most important contributions of traditional Buddhism to our economic and political theory is the emphasis on ethics. In economic activities, you produce, distribute and consume. Such wealth has to be acquired with others. A person should be free from debt and consider all his activities,body, word and mind without injuring others and himself. Exploitation of others; either human beings or animals in order to earn wealth is condemned. Wealth is desirable but it should be not obtained for its own sake.[4]

Thus the lawful sharing of resources would be an essential characteristic of pure land Buddhism. Resources not shared equally cause enormous social problems. The wide disparity between the rich and the poor arises out of resources not being equally distributed.[5]

Political tradition say that any ruler has to respect the Dharma, or the norm. In short, the norm is represented in five principles; (1) Respect for life, (2) for property, (3) for sex, (4) for truth and,

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4 Wealth has to be obtained by "Co-operation and zeal; collected by the strength of one's arm; earned by the sweat of one's brow and justly obtained in a lawful manner."The wealth acquired by lawful means gives happiness to those who earn it, and further, happiness in sharing it with others. He thus becomes free from debt and the earning of wealth by rightful means again increase that happiness." (Sanyutta Nikaya 1.137) In the modern world, the Four Aspirations preached by the Buddha to Anathapindaka is of great importance; particularly in paving the path for a pure land. The aspirations are:

a May I acquire wealth by lawful means,

b May I gain a good reputation along with my kinsmen and teachers,

c May I live long,

d May I attain a pleasant world after death (Angurrata Nikaya II.65)

5 Cakravatti Sihanada Sutta, Digha Nikaya.

(5) for a sober life free from intoxicants or drugs.[6] Any ruler, whatever the type of government is, bases his rule on this norm and on the will of the people--this is never violated.

The political objective is to create righteous society. The ethical basis flows from politics into justice. The basis of justice too is this ethical principle. Everyone is treated equal in attempts made to create that pure land Buddhistic society. By tempering justice with understanding even "punishment" is given with this ethical basis in mind. It is rehabilitative and reformative in character; rather than punitive.

In our traditional society, Buddhism recognises the importance of the institution of the family. The Buddha's teachings explain the various roles of the family members and how such roles should be performed by each member for the sake of both the family and the community; such as what duties the husband has to perform as regards to the wife, and how the wife should conduct herself towards the husband, describing the role of parents as against children. The traditional thought thus helps the strengthening of the institution of the family. This is very important in the context of modern times when this important institution is subjected to degeneration.

Our world has become industrialised. Thus, relations between industry and human beings have become complex. Dealings between employer and employees present enormous problems. In traditional Buddhist thought and practice, an employer's relationship with his employee has to be based on sharing, non-exploitation and compassion. The employee should also adopt an understanding, compassionate attitude towards his employer. While the employer should look after the employees; the latter should attend to his work with responsibility and dedication. Making people work by means of punishment or fear against their will is not the way of Buddhist thought and practice.[7]

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6 Sigalovada Sutta, Digha Nikaya.

7 Traditional Buddhist teachings explain how such problems are created, enables one to develop strategies to solve them. The Buddhist way is to understand what the problem is, its causes (their nature), ascertain them that there is a solution and work for the solution.

The socialization process is carefully taught and organised in traditional thought. The peer group here is very important. Great care is taken and energy expended to educate and enable the young people to select good friends who would contribute to their development as peers. Friends who are just friends in guise are described. The young people come to know of real friends in the process, and the entire life is considered, depending upon such peers as friends.

Social problems arise due to various persons. In the socialization process, some social problems arise due to getting addicted to liquor, gambling, over-indulgence in sensual matters etc. When these are known, a person could avoid the process of getting into such channels of dissipating wealth. In the modern world, such an awareness would be very productive. Alcohol, drugs, sex, gambling are the causes of social problems all over the world. How these harm the individual and the community is described in Buddhist teachings.[8]

In this modern world, a pure land concept invariably involves non-violent ways of solving problems. Today, technology has developed weapons; human beings' cravings have increased, and conflicts leading to their own extinction could easily erupt. Traditional Buddhism teaches that these conflicts all start from inordinate desire that engulfs the mind of man. This individual desire has to be rooted out and then, peace of a universal level could be established.

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Buddhist teaching did not develop non-violence only as a principle of self development. The Buddha experienced the violence that was found in the society of his day. He attempted to help the society to search for a strategy to contain such violence. Through understanding and gradual training of the mind, one could bring himself to a state of non-violence and help others to do so.

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Earthly "pure land" cannot be achieved without the resources available being equally distributed. It is the craving, the inordinate craving in the human being that makes him to possess a big portion of such resources to himself at the expense of so many others. This is the reason for the great disparity between the rich and the poor.

Buddhist thought advocates a simple style of life. The ostentatious flourishing style of life is not appreciated in Buddhism. When one leads a simple life, his needs do not "usurp" the resources meant for another. Conspicuous consumption and style of life should give way to a simpler manner of living. This has to come from a change of heart. Those in political and economic power should realise this and do whatever they could to achieve this objective.

It is only when a group of people are economically self sufficient that the pure land idea becomes workable. Self-sufficiency and self-help are thus emphasised in traditional Buddhist thought to achieve this end. The basic needs of all irrespective of any such and other variations have to be met. Economic stability and happiness thus ensuing should enable the pure land people to co-operate on spiritual matters.

Health, both physical and psychological is considered as a vital aspect of life. Without good health, no higher life is possible. Nutritious food, exercise, relaxation are thus emphasised. Concentration through meditation disciplines the mind. The body and the mind is thus developed. Today, when little attention is paid to such vital body-mind development, the traditional Buddhist values become relevant.

Development of the community depended on awakening the

personality and then involving the individual in community work to acquire and fulfill self-realisation. Once the personality is developed, the development of the community begins. Today where development is concerned, we think of economical, social, political, psychological, spiritual and environmental levels. And not only economic development all these involve both individual and community development. This is the theory of development that the Sarvodaya in Sri Lanka adopted.

It is based on the development of the human being, focussed on self-help. We learn to minimise the use of our own resources and make the best use of them. Non-exploitation of the environment is also involved. All living beings are allowed to exist, and respect for life ensures for individual or social development emphasise the oneness in human beings; the enormous potential that remains to be exploited and the methods of accomplishing this task.

The Buddhist teachings provide us something more than human rights- the rights living beings. Human beings, as well as all life do possess an indispensable right to exist. An on no account, without good reason should such life be subjected to suffering. Force or fear should not be applied to get animals or human beings to deliver services. Love and compassion should be the guiding rule.

The Sarvodaya is attempting to apply traditional Buddhist thoughts to modern society. In the first place, we are trying to awaken the human beings to realise his or her full potential. The he or she is made to learn that depending on one's own self is the best strategy in development. Equality of all without regard to any artifical barriers is then emphasised. Even with regard to sex, the distinction between male and female is reduced to the minimum. A woman can achieve the best that a man could achieve in life. Spiritual values based on Buddhist thinking, such as gratitude, respect paid to elders sharing, compassion and rejoicing at the success of others are taught. Discussion in the family as well as in the community is appreciated. Meeting frequently and arriving at decisions after such discussions and implementing such decisions arrived at together are practices that the Sarvodaya inherited from Buddhist thought. Perhaps in the

future, much more relevant to our "pure land" concept could be learned from Buddhist thought.

Nearly four decades of experimentation to apply Buddhist teachings to contemporary societal problems by the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement is summarised in the following charts. It is a living movement in over 10,000 villages and one's race, religion or political background does not matter as the principles and practices can be commonly tried out by all if they wish.

The individual, the famil and the community take the most important and critical place in nonviolent social change. Both traditional spiritual teachings and appropriate modern communication and other technologies are utilised for implementing the programmes. A network of global communities following such a path can contribute immensely to a happier and contented society in the 21st century.

In practising Buddhist teachings in development processes, while the awakening of human personality, human family and the community is the foundation it can reach national and international levels as shown in the preceding charts and diagrams. While Sarvodaya offers an alternative to the prevailing national and global systems in the economic and political sectors because of its ethical and non-violent approach to change it can avoid direct confrontation by resorting more to educational means.

It also has the added advantage of being acceptable to different religious groups as its approach is non-sectarian and value based. This means irrespective of religious, racial and political differences those who genuinely believe in peace and justice, environmental and biodiversity protection, gender equality and other accepted norms of present day development can willingly join this movement.

The world needs a sustainable and les energy and resource consuming life style. This is specially true for the populations of the newly emerging economies of the then socalled third world. Buddha's concept of a Samma Ajiwa or the Right Livelihood society is the model we can follow. The consumer society ideal or

the full-employment society ideal should be replaced by the full-engagement society ideal or the Right Livelihood ideal. That is the only way human society can face the challenges of the 21st century.

(Dr. A.T. Ariyaratne, President, Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement of Sri Lanka).

SARVODAYA CENTRAL THOUGHT

Harnessing the goodness of man for the Total Awakening of All

OBJECTIVE

To generate a non - violent total revolution towards the creation of a Sarvodaya social order which will ensure the total awakening of:

The human personalities	→	PAURUSHODAYA
The human families	→	KUTUMBODAYA
The village communities	→	GRAMODAYA
Th e Urban communities	→	NAGARODAYA
The national communities	→	DESHODAYA and
The world community	→	VISHVODAYA

PATH TO PERSONALITY AWAKENING =Paurushodaya

Metta

Establishing oneself deeply on the thought of loving- kindness and friendliness towards all life - man, animal and plant kingdom.

Karuna

Compassionate but scientifically planned actions to remove the causes that bring about suffering in the living world

Muditha

Learning to get dispassionate joy with every compassionate action

Upekkha

Establishing oneself in equanimity irrespective of the results of compassionate action such as name or blame, success or failure, loss or gain

Acts of Karuna or Compassionate Action

Shramadana - Sharing or gaft of labour

Buddhidana - Sharing or gift of knowledge

Shilpadana - Sharing or gift of skills

Waidyadana - Sharing or gaft of medical services

Boodana - Sharing or gift of land

Dhanadana - Sharing or gift of wealth

Dharmadana - Sharing or gift of spiritual wisdom

Jeevadana - Sacrificing one's whole life in the service of the world

THE TEN BASIC HUMAN NEEDS

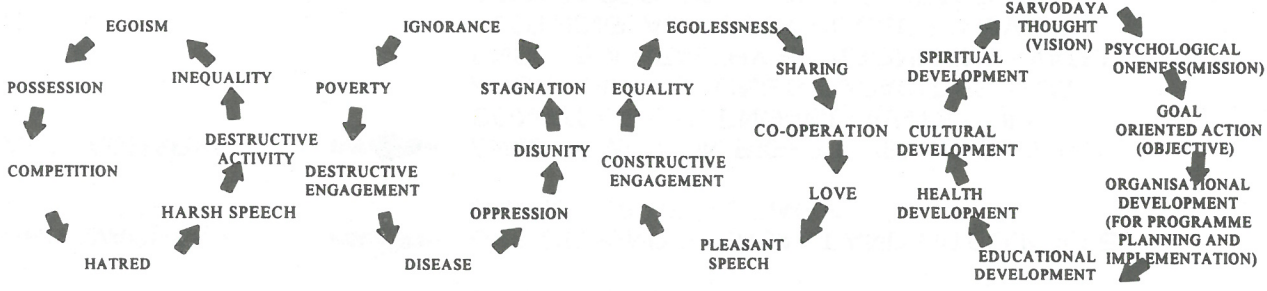
(IDENTIFIED BY SARVODAYA TO BE SATISFIED FOR FAMILY AND COMMUNITY AWAKENING)

1. A CLEAN AND BEAUTIFUL ENVIRONMENT
2. A CLEAN AND ADEQUATE SUPPLY OF WATER
3. A MINIMUM OF CLOTHING REQUIREMENTS
4. AN ADEQUATE SUPPLY OF FOOD
5. BASIC HEALTH CARE
6. A MODEST HOUSE
7. ENERGY REQUIREMENTS
8. BASIC COMMUNICATION
9. TOTAL EDUCATION
10. SPIRITUAL AND CULTURAL NEEDS

PATH TO FAMILY AWAKENING = KUTUMBODAYA

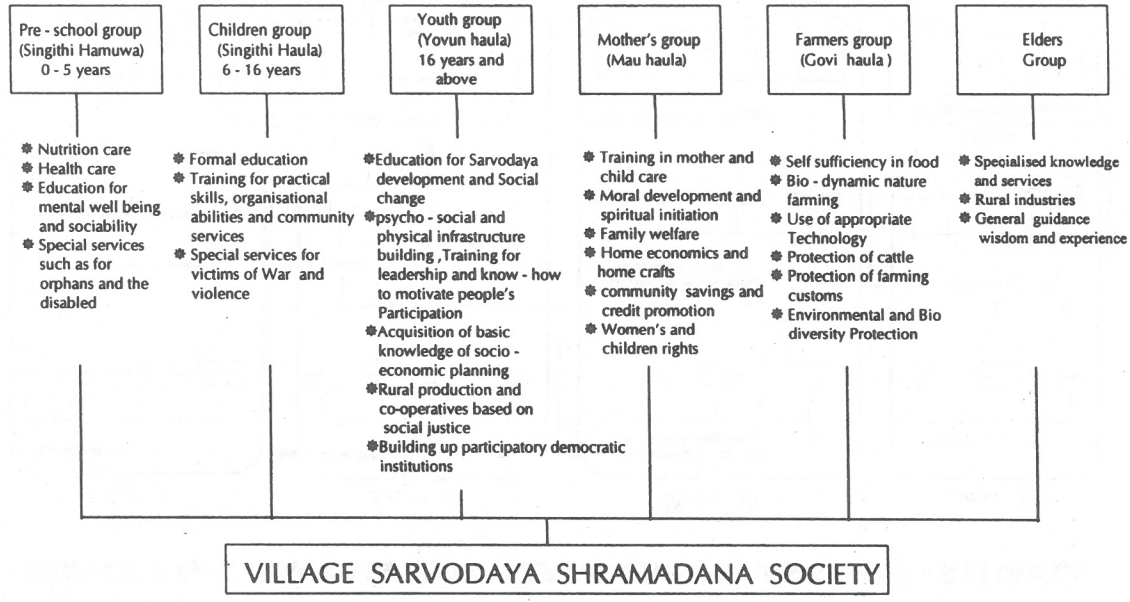
DANA	→	ADHERENCE TO THE PRINCIPLE OF SHARING ACCORDING TO THE NEEDS OF THE MEMBERS OF THE FAMILY
PRIYAVACHANA	→	USE OF, KIND PLEASANT AND INTELLIGIBLE LANGUAGE AT ALL TIMES
ARTHACHARYA	→	ENGAGEMENT IN RIGHT LIVELIHOOD WITH CONSTRUCTIVE ENGAGEMENTS ONLY ACCORDING TO ONE'S CAPACITIES THAT ENSURE A HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT, WATER, CLOTHING, A MODEST HOUSE TO LIVE IN, A BALANCED DIET, PROPER HEALTH CARE, ENERGY AND COMMUNICATION FACILITIES, LIFE - LONG EDUCATION, CULTURAL IDENTITY AND SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT
SAMANATHMATHA	→	RESPECTING THE PERSONALITY OF EVERY MEMBER OF THE FAMILY ON THE BASIS OF EQUALITY

PATH TO VILLAGE RE -AWAKENING
GRAMODAYA

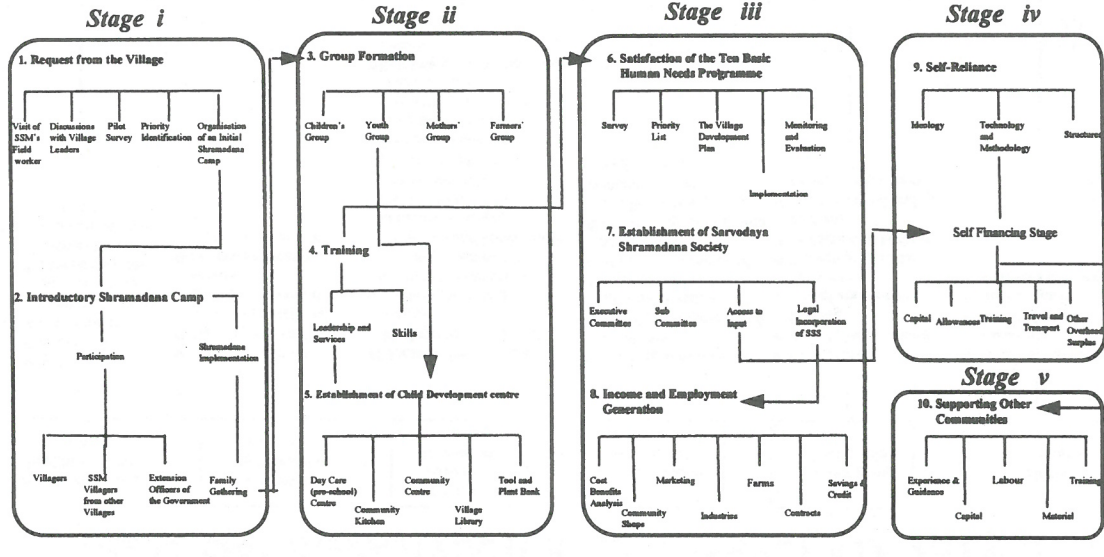


DECADENT VILLAGE	THERE IS A CAUSE	THERE IS A HOPE	THERE IS A WAY

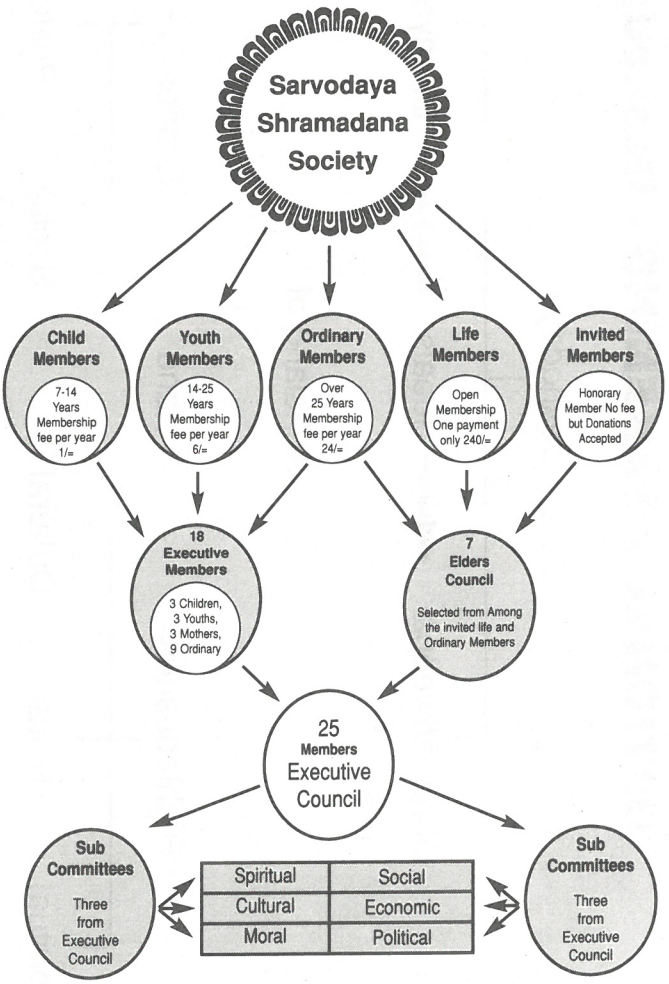
THE SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE IN A SARVODAYA VILLAGE


Pre - school group (Singithi Hamuwa) 0 - 5 years
Children group (Singithi Haula) 6 - 16 years
Youth group (Yovun haula) 16 years and above
Mother's group (Mau haula)
Farmers group (Govi haula)
Elders Group
Nutrition care
Health care
Education for mental well being and sociability
Special services such as for orphans and the disabled
Formal education
Training for practical skills, organisational abilities and community services
Special services for victims of War and violence
Education for Sarvodaya development and Social change
psycho - social and physical infrastructure building , Training for leadership and know - how to motivate people's Participation
Acquisition of basic knowledge of socio - economic planning
Rural production and co-operatives based on social justice
Building up participatory democratic institutions
Training in mother and child care
Moral development and spiritual initiation
Family welfare
Home economics and home crafts
community savings and credit promotion
Women's and children rights
Self sufficiency in food
Bio - dynamic nature farming
Use of appropriate Technology
Protection of cattle
Protection of farming customs
Environmental and Bio diversity Protection
Specialised knowledge and services
Rural industries
General guidance wisdom and experience
VILLAGE SARVODAYA SHRAMADANA SOCIETY

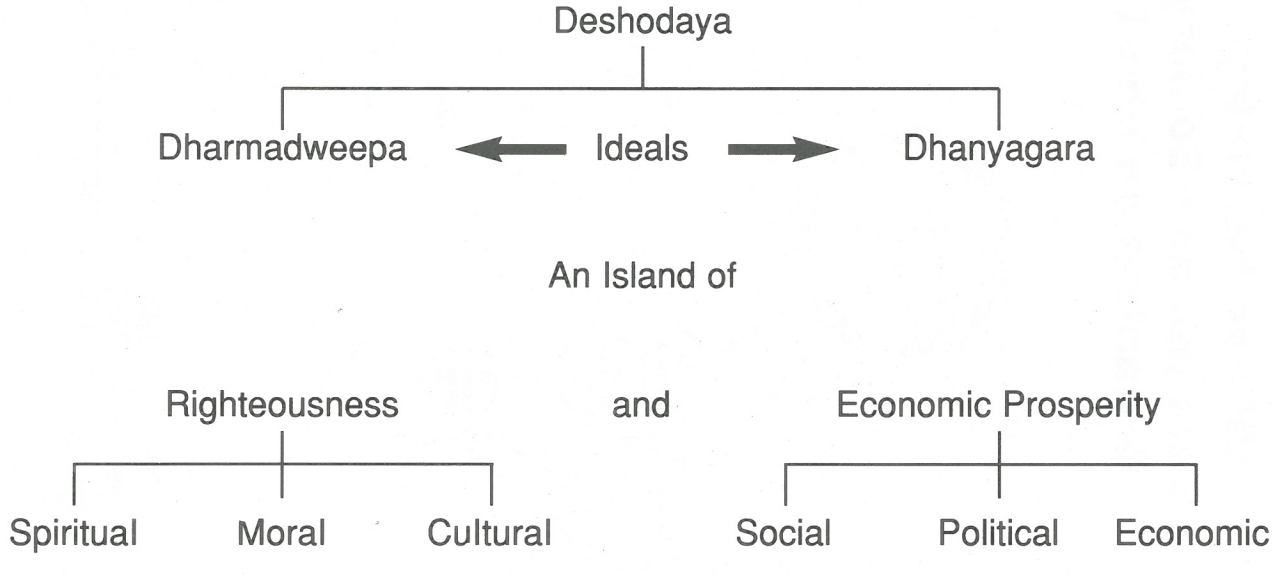
SARVODAYA'S PACKAGE FOR PARTICIPATION AND SELF - RELIANCE



Village Sarvodaya Shramadana Society: Organization chart



NATIONAL AWAKENING - Deshodaye



PATH TO NATIONAL AWAKENING - Deshodaya

1. Establishment of spiritual, moral and cultural values at individual, family, group, village and urban community and national levels.
2. Satisfaction of Ten Basic Human Needs of people beginning with the most deprived in society laying the foundation for a Right Livelihood society
3. Bringing about social development in village and urban communities by intensifying functional development educational programme for:
    (1) Awareness creation and leadership building
    (2) Community participation in decision - making
    (3) Community organisation for self - reliance and self - government
    (4) Community education for a global non-violent social order
    (5) Protection of cultural identity and promoting unity with diversity
    (6) Health development
    (7) Conflict resolution, National integration and peace
    (8) Full realisation of fundamental human rights for women and children, rule of law
4. Re-organisation of the political power structure in the country on the principles of:
    (1) Participatory democratic institutions and
    (2) Complete decentralisation of power to village and urban community level democratic institutions.
5. Re - structuring the national economy on the principles of.
    (1) National self- sufficiency with regard to basic hu man needs.
    (2) Adoption of small scale decentralised, labour intensive appropriate technologies for production purposes/ without destruction of nature or culture
    (3) Replacement of existing production relationships with non-exploitative trusteeship relationship enforced by law with a Right Livelihood Society in view
    (4) Complete non-dependence on exploitative international economic relationships while promoting healthy interdependent international ecoonimc relationships to create a just global society
    (5) Protection of the environment and bio - diversity

PATH TO WORLD AWAKENING = Vishvodaya

1. In all countries of the world, concerned individuals and groups initiate, promote and intensify Paurushodaya, Kutumbodaya, Gramodaya, Nagarodaya, Deshodaya and Vishvodaya movements according to their historical and cultural realities.

2. These individuals and groups should build Up a close communication relationship based on both affinity and vicinity and mutually support one another to build a no - poverty and peaceful society.

3. They should build Up alternative but Universal value - based

   (1) Living patterns/ Right Livelihood / Full - Engagement communities
   (2) Production, Distribution and consumption techniques and structures, and
   (3) Assist one another to break though existing ideological barriers and political boundaries to create interdependent just societies

4. They should show by example, how to build Up non-violent defence mechanisms and oppose all forms of piling Up of mass destruction armaments in their countries.

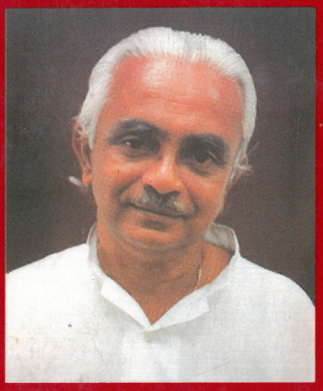
5. They should oppose all form of production that result in destruction of nature and bio - diversity, enslavement of women and children increase poverty and bring about economic imbalances, pollutions of the environment and psychological and economic impoverishment of communities anywhere in the world.

VISHVODAYA PROGRAMMES

"The Awakening of All", is the sublime thought of the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement, which includes the awakening of the global communities as well. With this in view the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement has set up the Sarvodaya Shramadana International Unit in order to achieve this long term objective.

The Programmes

1. To arrange programmes and expose to SARVODAYA the prospective foreign visitors who belong to the following categories:
   - ❋ University students and other young interested people who want to study the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement's development strategies, ideologies, programmes and projects as well as an alternative way of life as a part of their studies.
   - ❋ Scholars who are already in the field of development looking for alternative strategies to be researched.
   - ❋ Technical people in the field of development attached to various international organisations, NGOs in the Asia Pacific Region who are interested in a cross pollination experience.
   - ❋ individuals who are interested in a different approach to development.
2. Co-ordinating programmes of various volunteers who join the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement belonging to the following categories,
   - ❋ Sponsored and non-sponsored volunteers from overseas
3. Co-ordinating the Link-Up Programme. Under this Programme a link between the communities in the villages in Sri Lanka and organisations and individuals in other countries is established with a view to promote a meaningful dialogue, so that they could help and learn from each other.
4. Promoting Sarvodaya Groups overseas and co-ordinating their activities.
5. Despatch of Sarvodaya volunteers to work in other countries.
6. Promote Cultural Tourism to visiting groups and individuals.
7. Organising study tours for Sarvodaya volunteers to other countries
8. Organising international work-shops, seminars, conferences etc.., and talks and dialogues by visiting scholars and panicipants.
9. Promote information exchange and other similar exchanges



Dr. A.T. Ariyaratne is the Founder/Leader of the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement in Sri Lanka. Four decades ago, he worked in a rural village and together with the people, developed a philosophy and a Movement which is known as Sarvodaya. In it, the awakening of everyone is symbolised. Today it has spread into many parts of Sri Lanka and to some parts of the world too.

Ariyaratne was inspired by Vinobha Bhave and Mahatma Gandhi. Buddhistic experiences in Sri Lanka were added to this inspiration. Today the Movement works for everyone, regardless of race, creed, caste or colour. It is a unique philosophy based on potential greatness of human beings.

In these seven volumes what Ariyaratne wrote during the last four decades are collected. The beginning of Sarvodaya and its gradual development are reflected here. As Ariyaratne travelled around the world the influences he encountered and how he looked at such influences are seen in these volumes. The essays are refreshingly original and they contain what man should do in order to establish peace within himself and with the world. Ariyaratne's essays are a tribute to his spiritual explorations into himself and into the world.

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